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# THE SMART SET

SMART—Clever; witty; acute; quick; lively.—*Webster's Dictionary.*

## THE NEW ITALY

By Robert Carlton Brown

PASQUALE POMPILLI sat on the tablelike top of an end pile of the Tropic Line pier, with his broad back against the corrugated iron dock shed. His eyes were far out at sea, his thoughts somewhere between Italy and Halifax, fixed on the bright eyes of Carmelite and her babes, on one of the steerage decks of the *Albatross*. The steamship agent had said the boat would touch the pier yesterday, and this was the fourth morning that Pasquale had left his dispirited lodging house on Water Street and reached the dockboard with the sun.

The steamship agent was wrong; yet any minute the boat might enter harbor, and Pasquale would know the *Albatross* by her beetling prow, her low stern and her flags, all of which he had noted five months before when he arrived alone at that same pier in Halifax.

As he sat in the sun, his liting gaze dancing dreamily with the sun-shimmering wave crests in the harbor, sometimes he watched the gulls, again he whittled, and often he returned to reconstructing a sentimental thought he had been trying to shape into romantic Italian verse. His rich red lips parted, showing broad, milk-white teeth as he laughed with childish pleasure at his own poetry. The repetition of the verse theme pleased him. "A sail! A sail!" he would cry

in Italian, his eyes fixed on the horizon beyond the harbor.

Then he would repeat the stanzas he had already fixed in his mind. His fancy had taken him back to boyhood in Italy. He could see his mother sitting on the sands with the other fisherwomen, straining their eyes for the boat that would bring back their men. He recalled the eager cry, "A sail! A sail!" that passed from lip to lip on that rough shore. And now it pleased him to link that old familiar scene to the present one.

Every half-hour Pasquale slipped off the pile and sauntered to a point on the dock where he could see the maritime flags flying from Halifax hill. He read the flags eagerly, looking for the British ensign, for Carmelite was coming on a railroad boat sailing from Trieste and offering a cheap land-and-rail rate to New York.

At noon he went to his lodging house for soup and spaghetti. Several fellow countrymen, Nick, Pietro, Giovanni, Angelo and others, who had come with Pasquale to work in Canada, were awaiting friends and relatives on the *Albatross*. They asked idly for news. Pasquale only shook his head and sat down at the bare board. His dinner over, he returned and seated himself on the piling.

He stretched great arms yearningly,

feeling Carmelite in them already. He yawned, to make himself think he was keeping the watch quite calmly. But he could not fool himself. He tried to recall the differences between his children, wondering that he had not noticed them all more closely when they had been together on the farm near Latisano. Josephina, the eldest, had a fascinating little mole on her cheek. He remembered that. She was darker than the boy and the baby. Perhaps because she was the firstborn, her face stood out more vividly. The boy—well, Pasquale rubbed a reflective finger over his firm cheek and smiled archly; everybody said the boy looked like him. The *bambino*, the girl baby—she was a second Carmelite, with laughing eyes; a delicate, shell-like miniature of her mother.

But the repeated effort at recollection during the long months of work and saving to get a start in the new land made all four seem unreal. He wanted to look at them now. Would his little Pasquale remember him? Josephina would, of course; he warned with that thought. The baby, bah, she might remember sucking at his knuckly forefinger, but perhaps the more poignant memory of the colic cramps that had forced her to nibble at the knuckle would have effaced it.

A steamer entered the harbor. Holding to the edge of the shed, Pasquale leaned far forward. No luck. The boat was flying the American flag. That was not the one, but surely it was better than the British flag. America, New York, where he would take Carmelite and the children by train directly they left the boat and passed through the sharp lot of officials in smart uniforms, who would count the money in Carmelite's trembling hand, the money he had sent her to show the officials that she could buy her way into America.

They would take the train. Pasquale would buy two of the dollar boxes of lunch provided for immigrants at the station. One, he had already figured, would not be enough, for Josephina could eat like her mother, and the boy, by this time, must have grown into a proud appetite. Pasquale thought fondly of

his family and how they should eat; for now he could provide. They should have plenty—all they wanted. It would not be like Italy. He had one hundred dollars bound beneath the sash about his belt, and Carmelite would bring with her the thirty surplus dollars he had sent, with probably a dollar or two extra as proof of her loyal thrift. There would be twenty of that left after paying his fare to New York, for Carmelite had her ticket straight through. That would leave more than a hundred dollars to start with in America. It was all too idyllic.

If only the boat would come. All summer Pasquale had talked with his compatriots on the section gang about the coming of his family. New York was the place to spend the winter; it was delightful, like Italy, except for the cold, those who had been there agreed. There was always easy money to be made. Manual labor in Canada during the summer was all right, but one could not stop to live. There was real living to be had in New York in winter, on Mulberry and Bleeker Streets, or even further uptown along the East River.

Pasquale had already settled on being a fish peddler. His boyhood training suited him for that. He would sell fish, and take Carmelite and the little ones to moving picture shows on Saturday night. It would be delightful after working on a farm in Latisano and struggling with a pickaxe all summer in Canada.

Another boat steamed into the harbor and anchored out in a clear patch of blue water, framed in a cloudless stretch of sky.

Had Carmelite, he wondered, been seasick? The children, of course, had been all right—children are never seasick. But why did the boat linger so long out there where he could not see it?

He slipped off the pile and walked to the ship agent's office. The agent was busy and only shook his head toward Pasquale as he rushed through the room with a handful of yellow papers.

Pasquale returned to the dock. By the time the evening mist came up he had whittled a tiny boat for little Pasquale, out of a pine stick, and stuck up a match



in the middle for a mast. Again scanning the harbor, and making out nothing but two indistinct hulls, Pasquale carefully placed the toy boat in his pocket, slid off the pile and returned slowly to his lodging house. One more day, surely that would be all.

On reaching his River Street lodging Pasquale missed his companions. He sat down alone at the card table in the lounging space before a short, slovenly bar, his thoughts gradually peopling the vacant chairs. Carmelite should sit opposite him, holding the baby; Josephina should sit in that chair at his right, and Pasquale, Jr., should fill the gap at his left.

He only wished for time after the landing of the boat to take his family to this table and tell them how for days he had dreamed of them sitting around him. He would like time to take Carmelite to the bunk he had occupied in a bare room above, just for the sake of hearing her laugh and seeing the cold room actually filled as he had pictured it in his persistent dreams. But there would be no time for that. The immigrant train would move on for New York as soon as all had passed the officers stationed at the dock.

Pasquale would be there in that wonderful train, fitted out with plush, unlike the third class in Italy. He would be there with his wife and three children, and two of the dollar boxes of lunch.

"What's the matter?" cried a greasy little fat man who had come out behind the bar from a rear room.

"Where are Nick, Pietro, Giovanni and the others?" asked Pasquale in Italian, looking up quickly at the slow-moving proprietor.

"Why, the boat is in," answered the other in the same language. "They telephoned from the citadel that she'd come in at Pier Six—that's two blocks below the Tropic Line."

Pasquale bounded from his seat, looked again at the proprietor to make sure he was not playing a joke, and, his face fixed in a wide, boyish grin, pushed through the door. He headed for the pier, a trailing end of his red neckerchief fluttering behind him.

The *Albatross* was in. Because of her late docking, the steerage passengers were being hustled off through a covered passageway to the waiting immigrant trains.

Pasquale ran to the gangplank where first and second class passengers were leaving the boat. He looked about wildly for Nick, Pietro, Angelo or Giovanni. He did not find a familiar face. Among those leaving the boat, stewards carrying their tagged hand baggage, Pasquale did not see a single Italian.

Turning to a steamship officer, Pasquale uttered his nearest English equivalent of, "Steerage?"

"Back there by the trains," the officer pointed.

Pasquale ran along the side of the ship with pounding heart, looking up to scan the scattering of faces above the rail, as though expecting Carmelite or the children to peer down at him.

His emotional nature had responded instantly to the excitement of the hurried night landing. He pushed feverishly into the railroad waiting room where friends and relatives were allowed to greet the immigrants through a railing.

"Nick!" cried Pasquale, coming upon one of his friends, grinning through the grating to a younger brother who had come over to work at his trade of carpenter.

Nick turned at the excited exclamation. Instinctively he drew away from Pasquale, who demanded with flashing eyes: "Carmelite! Carmelite and the babies! Where are they?"

Nick's expression had become sober. He turned helplessly to Pietro, a squat, oily Italian, who stood by talking to a friend he had come to meet.

"Carmelite! Where is she?" demanded Pasquale in a strained, harsh voice, turning to grasp Pietro's arm.

A bent old man inside the grating cried in shrill Italian: "Pasquale! Pasquale! Carmelite! Carmelite!" Then he cackled harshly and turned to a group of girls, carrying their belongings wrapped in bulging white and red shawls. Their eyes were fixed soberly on Pasquale's purplish face. He strained against the iron bars and shouted at the old man.

The elder cackled insanely, pinched one of the girls' burning cheeks and cried: "Take this one. Carmelite goes back on the ship."

Pasquale thrust quivering arms through the iron rods, groping for the old fellow. Nick threw his arms about Pasquale and tore him away from the grating as a guard came up, attracted by the shouting. Pasquale pushed his distorted face forward, glaring murderously at Nick, and seizing his lean arms in a frantic grip.

"Carmelite! Carmelite!" he cried, his voice breaking. "What is the matter? Nick, you are my friend. Tell me! Tell me!"

He shook Nick with each word.

"It is true. She goes back," gasped Nick. "They are all talking of it. My brother, Francesco, spoke to the doctor."

"The doctor! The doctor!" shouted Pasquale, forcing Nick into a corner and knocking his head against the wall as though he would jolt loose the truth.

"Yes, yes," cried Nick, struggling to free himself from the frantic man. "She has the sick eyes. Trachoma, they call it. She is to be sent back."

"Back? Back? No!" cried Pasquale, releasing his grip.

The guard who had been watching stepped up and asked sharply: "What's the matter?"

Pasquale pushed him aside, charged through the crowd and burst open a steel-grated door, behind which an officer stood.

The uniformed watchman caught him by the throat as he leaped through. Pasquale plunged forward, his head down, like a charging bull. The watchman clung to him. Ahead, down the dim covered passage, Pasquale saw the lights above the ship's gangway. Carmelite was on the ship; they were keeping her there with her children, keeping her from him.

Pasquale would release her. The guard, clinging close, hampered him. He turned and crashed his red fist into the fellow's face. The restraining fingers loosened. Pasquale shook himself free and charged the steerage gangway, the

pent-up longing of months in his cry, "Carmelite! Carmelite!"

Two men in uniform threw themselves upon him. The frantic scream of a woman came from the ship as Pasquale crumpled to the floor.

Handcuffs were snapped on his thick, hairy wrists. He shook them in the guards' faces as he was hustled and pushed through a side passage out into the open.

Stubbornly he threw himself down, refusing to walk. Four blue-coated officers carried him. His lips only moved in agonized repetition of his wife's name. He had heard her scream, but he had not caught one glimpse of her. Probably she was locked in a stateroom, with the children. He had not even seen her eyes, those beautiful eyes that now were sick.

At the police station Pasquale received more rough handling because he could not speak English. The hour was too late for a hearing that night, and he was locked up in a close, black cell, alone with his black thoughts.

At first he pounded on the steel door and shouted Italian oaths. Then he pleaded with the silence of the place, repeating over and over the one English word he knew, "Boss, boss, boss!" in the hope that someone would hear and heed, someone with a heart, who could speak his tongue, someone who would help release Carmelite and her children from the hold of the hellish ship.

His slow peasant brain at last realizing the futility of pleading without answer, he broke into low sobs like a child locked in a dark room for punishment. He threw himself on the narrow cot and his shoulders shook with crying. His Carmelite was being sent back. He had heard vaguely of such rulings, but he had never dreamed such a thing could happen to his own family. Carmelite with bad eyes! Well, didn't the old fool Razzini, who had jabbered at him through the railing like a monkey, about taking a new woman, didn't he have a sick brain, and wasn't he old and useless—in fact harmful, because of his mindless, wagging tongue? Why should they not send Razzini back instead of Carmelite?

Didn't many Americans have bad eyes and wear glasses? He wished vainly that he had sent on a pair of American glasses with silver rims, by mail. Then they would have let her in. Trachoma! What was that compared to the crossed eyes of one of the guards who had carried him to the station house?

He recalled Carmelite's eyes and catechized himself closely concerning them. Even when they had been red with weeping they had been beautiful. No, it could not be her eyes. It must be some plot. Some rich man must have fallen in love with Carmelite and was keeping her from him. Pasquale's hands gripped the edges of the cot. He held hard and swore vengeance with devout, Catholic fervor. He would kill the man, blow up the ship.

Throughout the night he lay dumb, stricken, trying to understand why they would not let her land, why they would not let him see her.

With the morning came kind-hearted Nick, who had remained over with his brother to help Pasquale in his trouble. Pasquale pressed his face against the steel bars and asked question after question, in a mad melange.

Nick explained rapidly. Doctors from the United States Immigration Office had boarded the *Albatross* with the pilot as she was coming down the bay. They had lined up the steerage passengers who had tickets through to New York by rail and had given them a physical examination.

When Carmelite's turn came they had tested her eyes carefully and found evidence of the disease trachoma—a thing dreaded by the Americans, though to Nick it was little more than a reddening of the eyes. Perhaps they would have passed her but for the boy, Pasquale, who had caught sore eyes from a child on board. For this reason Carmelite and the boy were detained, examined again, and held for deportation.

"But Josephina and the baby? Their eyes are all right?" cried Pasquale anxiously, his heavy face lighting at thought of his eldest child. "They could get off, and then"—he lowered his voice—"maybe we could arrange to

break the door and let Carmelite and the boy loose!"

"No, no," exclaimed Nick, who had learned all he could. "The boat returns to Trieste tomorrow. You could do nothing with Josephina and the baby. You could not bring them up."

"Then I will sail back with them on that boat," cried Pasquale.

"If—if they let you out of here," answered Nick fearfully.

"But I have done nothing. I have stopped a man from stopping me when I wanted to see Carmelite."

"And that is a great deal." Nick shook his head solemnly. "They are very important people, these men in blue coats."

"If I had knocked down a sailor or a countryman in the steerage, that would not have been so bad?" asked Pasquale tensely.

"That would have been nothing." Nick shrugged his shoulders. "And if you were an American citizen, Carmelite's bad eyes could not keep her from landing."

"But I am going to be an American citizen!" cried Pasquale, throwing out his chest vigorously.

"Going-to-be is not yet," said Nick, shaking his head. "The Americans make these laws to protect Americans."

"I don't understand. I don't understand." Pasquale shook his shaggy head perplexedly and strained his bloodshot gaze through the grating.

A prison guard told Nick his time was up.

An hour later the steamship agent came to see Pasquale, the agent who had risked bringing Carmelite across without examining her eyes, gambling but little on the chance of her acceptance by the medical officers, for the price of taking her back to Trieste, if she failed at the examination, could be paid out of her fare to Halifax and leave a little profit.

He was a well dressed, suave little Sicilian of smooth speech.

"It is too bad," he said to Pasquale. "Signora Pompili suffers much to be torn from so fine a man, her husband. But it is the savage law of the Ameri-

cans." He threw up his hands as one who had lost no little profit because of the native savagery. "It is as sad a blow to you as it is to me, for I lose my commission by having to pay her fare and the boy's back to Trieste. I have come to ask if, in view of her sickness and despair, you are not anxious to pay the difference of fifteen dollars that she may return in a comfortable stateroom in the second cabin, with better food and accommodation for her sick self and child."

"But why must she go back?" cried Pasquale. "I am ready to take her here and provide for her and pay a doctor to cure her sick eyes."

"Yes—yes—but that is all too late. The doctors have passed the word. The papers are made out. She returns at ten o'clock tomorrow morning."

Pasquale crashed his fists against the steel cell door and turned to stride back and forth the three paces his cell allowed. Then he dropped on his cot, rocking back and forth, his heavy head between his hands.

Finally he looked up, with new lines cut through the firm flesh of his face. The steamship agent hovered solicitously at the grating.

"They took my money from me last night." Pasquale moistened his purplish lips and his tongue clacked with dryness as he spoke. "I want Carmelite to have the best, now that she is sick."

"I can arrange that; I can get the money from the police. It will cost me something, to be sure, but I will do it for you, Pasquale Pompilli. I am already going to great expense on your account."

"I could not help it!" cried Pasquale.

"Perhaps you will keep Josephina with you. She is already nearly six and would be of help to you; that would save the expense of returning her, too," said the suave agent.

"I could not keep the child. She must be with her mother."

"I shall take five dollars extra for her then, that she may be with her mother in the second class cabin," said the agent.

Pasquale made no answer; it was all too much for his slow, peasant mind.

When he looked up again, muttering,

"But I could not help it; it was not my fault," the agent was gone.

Pasquale's simple, childlike being was stirred to its base by disappointment. He had changed since the day before. He could hardly picture himself as the gay, romantic lover whittling on a pile as he waited the coming of Carmelite with the sure faith of love. Now he was utterly crushed, without freedom, without power, without Carmelite.

He raised his head at a clanking sound. Two guards stood in the open doorway of his cell. At their summons he stepped between them and walked out into the corridor. They led him through a winding passage into a courtroom where an austere magistrate sat.

Looking giddily into the sea of faces in front of him, Pasquale saw Nick and his brother on a front bench. His eyes had hardly lighted in friendly recognition when they encountered the swollen face of the guard he had struck. Pasquale's eyes dropped and he stood, sullen, until he was pushed before the magistrate. He understood nothing until an interpreter was called and he was questioned in welcome Italian about the swollen-faced man in the blue uniform.

Pasquale told the truth doggedly. He went on rapidly to speak of Carmelite, feeling that the interpreter was a friend. But he was sharply cut off. He listened blankly as the interpreter retold his story in English. He blinked his eyes at the frowning magistrate and nodded his head with emphasis as though he understood the English words the man beside him used.

He sought to get his story of Carmelite before the magistrate, but the interpreter cut short each essay. At length the judge wrote on a white slip of paper and tossed it over the head of an attendant to a clerk. There was a shuffling of feet. The two guards who had brought Pasquale out motioned him back toward the dark, narrow door through which he had come.

Pasquale whirled, and tugged at the interpreter's sleeve before his guard could lead him away. "What did he say?" he cried.



"Thirty days," snapped the other in Italian.

Only half understanding, Pasquale stumbled, heavy-footed, out of the courtroom; glancing once toward Nick, to read confirmation of the sentence in his pained eyes.

## II

A MONTH later Pasquale Pompilli was released from jail. In the office he received eighty dollars, the balance left after the agent had received his money. He was given, also, two letters from Nick that had been held pending his release.

Thrusting the money and letters into a pocket beneath the wide black sash about his waist, Pasquale walked slowly toward the water front. Confinement, worry and poor food had made his flesh flabby. His whole manner had been changed by the hard lesson he had learned. There was no jauntiness in his step.

As he passed the familiar Tropic Line pier he averted his eyes and walked rapidly, breathing hard with the exertion of mind and body.

Turning a corner, he entered the lodging house where he had waited those hopeful days. He had been able to cloak the place then in an atmosphere of romance. Now it was a shabby, barren, shuddersome place. He stepped up to the bar, ordering a pint bottle of Italian wine.

The squat proprietor looked at him sharply and moved his thick lips suddenly in an exclamation of surprise.

"Pasquale Pompilli!" he cried. "So you are out so soon?"

"Is it soon?" asked Pasquale bluntly, dropping his gaze, for the proprietor made him feel ill at ease, with his artificial, affected, foreign manner.

"Nick came back here and waited two days, but they would not let him see you again at the prison, so he went on to New York with his brother," said the proprietor.

"Yes, I have letters from Nick," answered Pasquale with reserve.

Refusing to talk, he seated himself gloomily at a sloppy table with his bottle

of wine and drew out Nick's letters. The first was written as Pasquale's good friend was leaving Halifax. In it he told of attempts to see Carmelite before she was sent back. But he had been denied that privilege, though he had managed to write her that Pasquale would send a letter on her return to Latisano, that Pasquale had wanted to take the same boat back with her, but had been detained. Nick wrote Pasquale what detail he could gather from a steerage steward. Carmelite had refused to return second class, fearing that it would cost Pasquale more, and she even remained in the steerage stubbornly after being told that the difference in passage had been paid. Pasquale flushed with pride at this. They might subdue his spirit in jails, but they could not break Carmelite's.

The letter closed with advice from Nick that Pasquale join him in New York as soon as he was freed, that it would be foolish to return to Italy now that he had taken one step forward, and that Carmelite and the boy would be cured in six months and allowed to enter through Ellis Island. Pasquale would meet her there. In that thought there was nourishment. Pasquale drank deeply of the good plain wine and opened the second letter. It was simply a word from Nick giving his New York address and telling Pasquale that he would look into the fish peddling business for him and have everything ready for him to go to work the minute he reached New York, though he himself was thinking of going on a farm in New Jersey.

Encouraged by Nick's optimism, Pasquale settled with the lodging house proprietor, shouldered a stout box of his belongings and walked to the railroad station.

There, before he was allowed to buy a ticket, he was asked for a passport. Never having been in the United States and not having a passport allowing him to enter as an immigrant, Pasquale had to pass the immigration officers. Nothing had been harder for him since he was sentenced to jail. He trembled as they turned back his eyelids and tested them for trachoma. His knees knocked to-

gether with a strange mingling of fear and anger as he answered the questions put to him, and his hands shook so he could hardly count out his money when they required to know how much he had brought for his new start in the United States.

Each requirement, each question, brought Carmelite vividly to his mind. When it was all over and he had been passed and allowed to buy a ticket, he sank down in a plush-covered seat and looked dismally out of the streaked window, perspiring from nervous weakness. He could not bring his eyes to look at the vacant seat opposite. Carmelite was to have sat there, with the baby in her lap and the boy at her side, pointing out to both the cows, horses, chickens and dogs as they flew through the new land to New York.

Quiet, dark little Josephina was to have sat demurely at his side. Pasquale dropped a heavy hand to the seat. It encountered no dainty dress, no warm, childish hand pressure. He drew the red fist back quickly and stared at it with pained eyes, not knowing exactly what he missed.

The train moved. It passed near the military post on top of Halifax hill. Pasquale did not look at the hill, and he tried not to remember that he had promised himself to point this out to Carmelite and the children with pride as one of the places of interest in the new land with which he was already familiar.

When he became hungry he would not buy a box of lunch from the agent on the train. Instead, he got off at a station and bought half a dozen apples from a man who had a basket full of them, and when he returned to his seat he persistently kept his eyes off the happy family parties dining out of dollar lunch boxes, supported between the knees of the father and the mother.

At night, as the lean, sallow, tipless immigrant porter passed through the car and mechanically pulled out the seats and made them into boxlike beds, throwing a scratchy, grimy blanket on top of each, Pasquale stood in the vestibule between two cars and smoked a cheap cigar, his eyes stinging, his heart

longing as he recalled the fun he had expected to have in introducing the novelty of sleeping on a train to his snug little family.

Next day, riding through the weary stretches of country, he pondered bitterly on the case of old Razzini, who was senile and yet had been passed into the new country, while Carmelite, vigorous in mind and body, had been barred because she had sore eyes. Didn't people have stomachaches and earaches and toothaches? Those were little enough. Then why should a whole nation pick upon sore eyes? Surely this was a strange new country and probably he had many things to learn, though why he should learn them he did not know.

A friendly fellow who had lived long in New York engaged Pasquale in conversation, giving him glowing accounts of the new city and speaking often of a hotel on Bleeker Street where Pasquale should stay until he could look up Nick at his address.

Knowing no better course, Pasquale drifted along with a crowd of his countrymen, led by this hotel runner, when they reached New York. It was evening, and as they rode from the station in a street car all were dazzled by the gay, lighted streets and the high buildings that seemed to merge into the leaden sky.

The hotel on Bleeker Street proved to be a very satisfactory stopping place. Before going to bed, the awkward little party enjoyed a good Italian meal and went to a moving picture theater around the corner, where native comedians sang and repeated familiar jokes with a patriotic flavor.

Even Pasquale laughed and forgot his trouble for a little.

Early in the morning he found a countryman who was going downtown to an address near Nick's, and who volunteered to be his guide.

From Nick's lodging Pasquale was directed to a nearby café, situated in a cellar; a café with all the familiar noisome atmosphere of a native Sicilian restaurant. There Pasquale found Nick seated with a dark, fat man whose heavy gold watchchain denoted prosperity and

whose large nose and liquid eyes showed both purpose and imagination.

Nick and Pasquale rushed into each other's arms, kissing cheeks and hugging in the demonstrative enthusiasm of childlike peasants. The successful man beamed upon them both benignly, as though they were his sons. When Nick introduced Pasquale quite informally, the big man included Pasquale in a generous smile, exclaiming: "Come with Nick and buy land from me. It is the sure road to riches here in America, the country of gold."

"No," said Pasquale, dropping into a chair. "I have had enough of starving and slaving on a farm in Italy. The city is the place for me. With a wife and children here I can have a good time. I will sell fish for a lira a pound. I will make money so Carmelite shall dress like the rest here; the children will go to school and—"

"Have you heard from Carmelite?" Nick interrupted.

"No," said Pasquale. "I waited to see you before writing. You think she can be cured and get through in six months' time?"

"The steward who heard the doctors talk, and knows of many cases of this kind, says there is no doubt of it in her case. I told Carmelite in my letter that you would want her to go to a good doctor in Trieste or Latisano, and that you would send her money."

"That is right," said Pasquale. "I will write today and send the money. Then tomorrow I will go to work."

"You still want to sell fish?" asked Nick.

"Why not go to the country—buy land?" suggested the successful Italian sitting between them.

Pasquale paid no attention to the persistent suggestion. His mind was made up.

"Did you keep your promise and look into the fish business for me?" he asked Nick.

"The time has been so short. I have been out looking at farms," said Nick. "But I have the address here of a man who rents carts, and he will tell you where to buy the fish and where to

sell them." He handed Pasquale a smudged card.

An hour later Pasquale and Nick parted as affectionately as they had met.

"You will change your mind and come to the country; it is better than here in the city, you will find," Nick urged at parting.

"No," said Pasquale. "I will not starve and slave and shiver. I will make money out of fish."

That afternoon, having secured lodging at a dollar a week in a dark, damp room which he shared with two others, Pasquale sat down and wrote to Carmelite, telling her to see a doctor about her eyes and come directly to New York as soon as she was surely cured. The letter was short, for Pasquale's correspondence vocabulary was meager, but it contained all his words and all his feeling.

He wrote down the address of his lodgings and asked Carmelite to send him word at once. Going down to the street with the open envelope and letter in his hand, he turned in at a corner banker's and paid forty-eight dollars for a forty-five-dollar Italian draft, which he sealed in the envelope with the letter and gave to a clerk, who wrote the address on it in a flowing hand.

Pasquale inspected the address, bought postage stamps and dropped the letter in a mail box some blocks away. He had heard so much of the sharp tricks of Americanized Italians that he could not trust the postbox in the banker's office.

With less than twenty dollars left, Pasquale hunted up the fish cart man and paid down four dollars for a month's rental of a rusty scale and a racked pine box on two staggering wheels.

Next morning, with an attempt at enthusiasm, Pasquale was up at dawn. Before five o'clock he appeared at the shop of the fish dealer from whom he had rented the cart. His cart was there; Pasquale recognized it with a thrill of pride as the means by which he would make the beginning of a fortune in America.

For six dollars the dealer sold him two boxes of soft, unpopular fish packed in ice, and told him briefly to unpack

them and load up his cart. Pasquale worked with zest, patting the sides of the strange fish and wondering a little that in America people would buy them so long out of water.

The dealer sent his boy with Pasquale to take him to a nearby tenement district, where he could sell his fish.

The boy did his duty, leaving Pasquale alone in the middle of a strange street at six o'clock in the morning, with the advice that he'd better not lose his direction.

Pasquale felt embarrassed and abashed as he trundled his heavy cart through the street, which was just beginning to show signs of life.

Not knowing the American fashion of pushcart peddling in New York's East Side, he wheeled along, shouting lustily, "*Pescel Pescel*"

The low-browed Russian Jews of the district to which the dealer had sent Pasquale looked at him stupidly, wondering what he was shouting, and disappointed to find that his fish were not pickled.

Being unable to interest any of the heavy-eyed housewives who gradually began to appear on the street, Pasquale cried "*Pescel Pescel*" even louder, until his throat was raw.

Two hours passed and he had sold nothing. Thinking that he had struck a bad district, Pasquale ventured forth for himself, being careful to turn few corners for fear of being lost.

At noon he left his pushcart standing on the curb and stepped into a saloon, where he snatched at a little free lunch and gulped a glass of beer while he watched over his cart through the window.

All afternoon he tramped the streets, working his way back toward the dealer's, near Fulton Fish Market. At last he sold two fish to a little girl for ten cents, and that was the sum of his first day's business.

He went back, complaining, to the dealer. He said the fish were bad, that buyers turned up their noses and passed on. The dealer shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, gesticulated and finally sunk his hands far down in his pocket as though he were deep in despair. He

said Pasquale must have reached the wrong district; he would send a man with him tomorrow to show him how to sell fish in America. It was easy once one knew how.

With much magnanimity, the dealer bought back Pasquale's load for a dollar and fifty cents, and as soon as Pasquale had left, the shrewd little fellow sold the undesirable goods to a glue maker for thirty-five cents.

Pasquale was dejected that night. The ten cents he had taken in, he spent on a moving picture show. But even the liveliest films did not divert him. He went home miserable and threw himself on his cot, under the covering of a wretched, soggy red blanket, where he fell asleep before his roommates returned from their café.

Next day he bought better fish, and his patron dealer sent a man to guide him to a small Italian colony, where Pasquale managed to get rid of half of his load and realized within a dollar of the price of the fish.

A little encouraged, Pasquale tried for a week to gain a foothold in the fish peddling business. He exhausted his capital in the effort, and learned too late that competition in the fish business was keen, and that the patron dealer lived by preying on ignorant newcomers.

His dream dissipated, Pasquale listened to the advice of one of his roommates, a hollow-eyed, sunken-chested fellow who sneaked in late at night and slipped out early in the morning to his business of opening oysters on a floating barge tied to a dock at the foot of West Washington Market.

"Learn to open oysters," Pasquale was advised. "There is good money in that, after you know how. Do not try anything that takes money until you find out the American way. Work for somebody until you learn English and how things are done."

Eager to try anything which would put back into his pockets the fifteen dollars he had parted with in ignorance, Pasquale finally learned the address of Rini, an Italian boss who ran a big restaurant and saloon in the neighborhood and hired his unfortunate country-



men at starvation wages to open oysters for his bar, his restaurant and a chain of outside hotels.

## III

With renewed optimism Pasquale applied for work at oyster opening. Rini, the boss, was willing that Pasquale should try his hand. He offered him thirty-five dollars a month for six fourteen-hour days a week, with eight extra on Sunday.

Pasquale accepted gladly. The hours were longer and the pay less than he had had on the railroad in Canada, but an opportunity was all he asked. He would learn to open oysters under the hard boss and then apply for piecework on the West Washington Market barges, where he could make as much as five dollars a day, his roommate had said.

Next morning at six he went to work. A swarthy Sicilian showed Pasquale how to clutch a muddy, jagged-shelled oyster in his left hand and jab for an opening with the oyster knife held firmly in his right. Pasquale learned that if he was unable to effect an entrance at once, he should place the oyster in an iron spike imbedded in a block of hard wood which looked like a hat form, and knock the crimp off the edge of the shell with his oyster knife.

Then, when the sap began to run and a thin gray line suggested the meaty interior, Pasquale took a firmer grip on the carpenter's friend, and with one dexterous twist forced his knife through the crevice and pried open the powerful jaws. When the hinge was hanging loose he cut the eye off the upper edge, broke off the top shell and severed the eye from the bottom one, gripping the oyster with his dripping knife and skillfully throwing it into a large granite dishpan thick with scum.

At first the work looked easy, but that night as Pasquale skulked home from his slimy stand at nine o'clock and slid quietly into his dollar a week lodging, he realized that New York did not offer the gay life he had expected. Yet the work paid well, he reflected.

He dropped on his cot exhausted, and

did not awake until his roommate tousled his hair and shouted in his ear at dawn next day.

During the early morning hours Pasquale did not find it so hard to open his first thousand oysters, but his fatigue grew by geometrical progression as he opened thousands, with only two brief gaps for hurried meals from the lunch counter. By the time he had reached his fourth thousand he was very glad to quit, but he did not get out of the place without a reprimand from Rini, who insisted that even a new man should open five thousand his second day.

His hands cut and bleeding, stinging from the salt, Pasquale hurried home, trying to keep his eyes on that bright day when Carmelite and the children should really arrive. It was hard to keep his head in the clouds, but he managed it until he crossed a boardwalk and happened to look down. Then, with a shiver, he realized that he was mentally trying to shove his shiny oyster knife through the cracks in an effort to pry the planks apart.

That night he dreamed of being salted and peppered, ketchuped and lemon-juiced and swallowed by a great big cooking oyster with yellow teeth and a bold black mustache dripping beer foam. He had opened oysters until his eyes ached, his stomach reeled and his legs trembled, and even in his dreams he went on doggedly with the work.

The hideous dream of the cooking oyster awakened Pasquale. He wiped off the red comforter, thinking it was the ketchup, and sitting up in his red flannel shirt, struck at the bewhiskered apparition of a legless, soulless oyster with a mustache, a swagger and a gaping mouth.

The apparition disappeared, and Pasquale Pompilli found himself standing with clenched fist in the middle of the dark bedroom.

"Him dam' son of gun!" he cried, shaking his mutilated fist and glaring.

His proud English was directed against Pietro Rini, the generous, patriotic Italian boss who paid something less than eight cents an hour for the sweat of his hands and soul.

"Him one dam' son of gun," repeated

Pasquale violently, as he looked at the clock and wearily drew on his thick shoes, still wet from the soaked floor on which he had stood the past two days.

Without anything to eat, Pasquale scuttled out of the windowless den and hustled, hat down and hands in his pockets, through a succession of miserable streets, ducking at last into the side door of a big corner saloon and restaurant, bearing the sign:

PIETRO RINI

BIGGEST BEER IN THE CITY

OYSTERS

Inside, Pasquale hung up his coat, cast a shifty glance at Pietro Rini, who was always on hand at opening hour to keep track of his men, and who now stood with careless thumb thrust in the top pocket of his green-striped vest, watching with critically cocked eye one of his frowsy-headed barkeepers bowling out big bumpers of beer to early longshoremen and teamsters.

Rini scowled at Pasquale and strolled over to the oyster bar, where he leaned carelessly on his elbow and watched with a sneer his three slaves digging into the eyes of oysters. They worked with frightened speed, watching the boss with slow, sullen eyes, their fingers flying feverishly, their faces flushed, their pulses quick. Pasquale fell into his place with the galley slaves and began shuffling his eyes with the same nervous, haunted haste of the others.

Rini's bar was long and polished, his oyster bar short and sloppy. But both were busy; dripping schooners and full shells were dragged restlessly over them daily from getting-up time till far past bedtime.

Pietro Rini set no moral model to his employees. Approaching his heavy-eyed men that morning, he scoffed: "You no getta sleep. Usa da head. Maka much mon', lika me. I no work fourteen hour. Usa da head."

The poor human blanks only half understood. They knew Rini was clever and was mocking them, but none of them had had enough sleep to be perfectly clear about it.

Rini looked on aloofly at Pasquale, irritated by his tardiness and awaiting an opportunity to find fault with his work. Suddenly the desired flaw presented itself.

"Droppa da oyst!" cried Rini, advancing threateningly on Pasquale. "You waste time on da mudder."

Pasquale gave a guilty start, and realized that in his nervousness he had been struggling to find the front door of a "mudder," a shell filled with mud in place of a succulent live oyster.

"I'm sleepy," Pasquale grumbled in Italian, rubbing the salt, moist back of his hand over his eyes. "I did not sleep last night. My eyes hurt."

"Sure your eyes hurt!" cried Rini in Italian, gazing wrathfully into the strained, bloodshot eyes that looked sullenly into his. "You're no good at opening oysters. My eyes are all right. I don't kick. Use your head. Get rich. Make money easy, like I do," he taunted. "This is the land of gold you have heard about."

"But you are lucky. I have not been here long. I will make money, too!" cried Pasquale, with a flash of his old spirit.

"Maybe, yes, maybe." Rini shrugged his shoulders and dropped his smug face abruptly, a sign that his moment of condescension was over and that again he was the beetle-browed boss.

Pasquale returned to his oysters and his thoughts. He was rather pleased that he had dared assert himself to Rini. He felt superior to the chesty fellow. He knew there must be something dishonest behind Rini's rise, and he was glad he had spoken.

Pasquale had kept his eyes open since he had been at Rini's. He had talked with his fellow slaves and learned the reason why Rini catered to toughs, touts, improvident laborers and loiterers, the scum that is there for the skimming. He learned that Rini paid fifty dollars a week to a police official in the precinct, in consideration of the police officer's apparent ignorance of the closing hour and the things that were done at Rini's.

Already Pasquale had begun to catch on to American ways. He had figured

out to himself that he was being paid at the rate of eight cents an hour because the police official was getting twenty-seven cents an hour, asleep or awake, from Rini, for some kind of service for which he did no work.

Pasquale had learned, too, that no one ever lasted long at Rini's oyster bar. Human endurance could not stand out against the drudgery. His fellow slaves had told him that during the last five weeks seven new oyster openers had come and gone. When one plump and healthy oyster opener became a mere shell at the counter there was always another to take his place, the same as with Pasquale's pile of bivalves before him. Rini was "grand" to his needy countrymen, he never stood by and saw one of them suffer from lack of work, so long as the man had fifty cents to invest in an oyster knife.

Rini's argument was that in Italy eight cents a day looked fair, so in New York eight cents an hour should be positively intoxicating. At that rate a man could live two weeks on one day's pay. But he never mentioned the fact that soup meat and macaroni cost more in America.

Pasquale pondered the words of Rini all morning. The black-visaged boss was right. He should use his head, he should think and devise some way to make money easily, so when Carmelite and the babies came he could enjoy those pleasures and luxuries which he knew were in New York. It was the only way to do—either that or die working. Yes, Pietro Rini was right; he was a superior man to his slaves, for that was all they were, sweating out their life blood, and Pasquale was one of them. He wouldn't be much longer. Still, what else could he do? What clever idea could he get? He, a peasant, a man with a hoe. He hadn't been in New York long enough to know anything of the language of the people. He couldn't expect to go into their business games and beat them.

Still, there were his own countrymen to be lived on and preyed on. Men made money at that; witness Rini, and Giovanni, with whom he had worked in

Canada. He had met Giovanni in New York, and had learned that Giovanni had allied himself with the Camorra; he was wearing good clothes and taking life easy.

Pasquale brooded over his situation and prospects for a week while he worked at Rini's. Pietro, who had come across with Nick and Giovanni and Pasquale, had found work as a shoeblack under a boss who was another Rini. He made but six dollars a week and worked as many hours as Pasquale, though not so hard, so Pasquale, after all, had not fared badly. If he could only stick to this job until luck came his way, until some chance offered!

As oyster after oyster went its way, and Pasquale reflected on the fact that life is fleeting, he became more and more certain that luck would be the hole in the fence through which he would slip into a choice seat in the grandstand and ever afterward sit by and look on at the great game of life. A devout Catholic, he believed in miracles. He went on his way to work next day, and his faith supported him through the long, more than monotonous morning, standing at the revolting oyster bar.

Luck must come to him. It had come to Rini. Rini's silence proved that. Luck can't be lured. He must wait. But it was hard, and time was pressing. Already his eyes went black for frightful seconds; the oysters became living things that spoke to him, talked to him foolishly as they came up one by one to have their eyes gouged out. His hands became uncertain; he felt a nasty sickness at the stomach; he began to feel sorry for the oysters, to pity them, even to sympathize with them, as an understanding brother.

When Rini passed just before the noon hour Pasquale knew the meaning of the quick, contemptuous glance the boss shot at him from beneath fearful black brows. It meant that he was to go as the rest had, before the night was over. He would lie down and quit. He wouldn't wait to be fired. He'd have to quit, like the others; dog-tired, eye-strung. Each time now that he thrust his knife through the eye of an

oyster his own eyes twitched and went askew, and dots danced before them.

It was no baby's play, this opening of oysters. Twice when he fumbled a shell in an effort to goad on his lagging energy, his companions looked at him sharply, and he knew what that meant, for he had seen one man tired out, and he had looked at him sharply, too, a little contemptuously, as Rini, for he was standing the work—then.

When the noon hour came, Pasquale had neither heart nor stomach for the pickings at the free lunch counter which Rini grandly allowed all his employees, because it often kept them from going out, and shortened their noon half-hour sometimes by fifteen minutes.

Instead of eating, Pasquale burst into the open air. His hands felt big and numb and strange. He was almost certain he could not force them into his pockets. Mental elephantiasis seized him through tired nerves and muscles. His feet were those of a lead giant's, his eyes a mastodon's, pickled, salted and peppered, his fingers each a clumsy leg.

Relief from the hellish monotony of that counter refreshed him in five minutes. He felt better. Reaction accelerated his mind. He began to think clearly. He was flushed with a sort of fever born of faintness, and the very nullity of his body made his mind assertive and facile beyond precedent.

He stopped before a cheap jeweler's window, attracted by a display of imitation pearls on a black velvet tray. An idea penetrated through his slow-moving mind. It was an odd, weird idea, like one he had had once after drinking too much strong wine.

There were those imitation pearls, priced at fifty cents each. He had heard tales at the bench about big pearls found at long intervals by oyster openers. Perhaps, he thought, he could fool Rini, or somebody. He might buy one of those false gems and pretend to have found it in an oyster, selling it for a high price. That would be luck like Rini's. With that start he would surely get ahead. It would be a clever American method.

But something told him work was

better. He did not, however, discard the idea, but thought of it moodily as he turned his leaden steps toward the saloon, after taking his full half-hour for the first time, like a man, and enjoying the daring of it.

When he lagged in Rini looked up from a bottle of wine he was "splitting" with a political friend, glanced at the clock and scowled.

But Pasquale didn't care. He had a secret notion that he could be the Garibaldi of the oyster opening business if he wanted to work his false pearl idea.

He went back to work, feeling in his heavy bones that he was not going to last out the afternoon. Mechanically he shuffled through his labor, thinking of how he could discount luck if he wanted to and really find a pearl which he might sell for thirty, forty dollars even.

Rini noted the abstracted look on the face of his slave and glanced at him eagerly two or three times within an hour, trying to guess what was going on in the mind of Pasquale.

Just before three o'clock Rini was bidding a second political friend to have a glass of wine with him, when he glanced toward Pasquale and made a sudden bound.

Pasquale Pompilli had made a quick, uncertain movement, the cause of which Rini, from experience, had instantly divined. Pasquale had clutched something from the oyster shell, and he was clumsily trying to conceal it. He shoved a swollen hand into his trousers' pocket.

As Rini advanced with a cry of, "Put that down!" Pasquale glared up at him with bloodshot eyes, wild and defiant. He dodged around the corner of the bar and through the door, heavily, for he was tired, dog-tired.

"Catch heem!" shouted Rini, in general alarm. "He steala da pearl. Da beeg pearl! I see heem! Catch heem!"

There was keenness of excitement in the chase, for the prize might be large. Pasquale had indeed found a pearl. The unexpected had happened. He knew that fine gem pearls were seldom discovered in oysters grown in beds other than regular pearl grounds. But he



also knew that Rini had realized over three hundred dollars for a big black pearl found in an oyster in his shop by one of his eight-cents-an-hour workmen, who was too fearful to claim it as his own.

Pasquale, keyed to daredevil pitch, ran on, the strength of desperation in his heavy, deadened legs, as he staggered straight down the street toward a subway station.

If he could only get away with this pearl he had found, it might mean a start in America.

"Devil's luck!" cried one of the panting pursuers in Italian. "I saw the pearl Pasquale found. It was big. Worth a hundred dollars, maybe."

"He's got the devil's luck if he gets away from Rini," answered the man's running mate, glancing over his shoulders at the puffy proprietor who panted behind, shouting whenever he could catch enough breath.

At that moment Pasquale stumbled and fell headlong on the pavement. In a moment they were upon him, before he could pull himself together. Rini plunged his pudgy hand into Pasquale's pocket and drew out the pearl.

At first his eyes glinted greedily; then they narrowed and he glared contemptuously at the gem.

"A slug!" he cried angrily. "Worth ten cents!" He turned the pear-shaped slug of purplish sheen in his soft white fingers and thrust it nonchalantly into his checkered vest pocket.

Pasquale was struggling to his feet. One of the slaves offered to help him rise.

"Let him go!" cried Rini, jerking the man away. "He wanted to steal and run away; let him stay there. He'll pay the price of his pearl."

#### IV

WHEN Pasquale finally gained his feet, he looked about the street and found himself alone but for two or three curious bystanders and a group of interested boys.

Not knowing exactly what had happened, and being unable to think clear-

ly, Pasquale limped painfully in the direction he knew his lodgings lay. Worn out, his mind refusing to act, he dragged himself up the long flight of stairs and dropped down on his attic cot, too weary to pull the cheap red comforter over him.

Next morning when his roommate shook him by the shoulders and shouted in his ear that he would be late to work, Pasquale rolled over, partly opened his eyes and muttered in Italian, "Oysters, oysters, oysters."

His friend, feeling the flush of fever on Pasquale's forehead, called to the third man in the room, and together they raised Pasquale to a sitting position and tried to push his clumsy, damp shoes onto his swollen feet. But the moment they released their hold on his form Pasquale slumped back onto the bed and lay inert.

For two weeks he tossed with fever. Twice a fussy little native doctor with long, twitching gray whiskers came and looked at him, but little could be done, since Pasquale had no money and could not be made to talk rationally.

At length, his strong peasant constitution surviving the shock of sickness, he sat up on his cot weakly one day and for the first time remembered the details of finding the pearl at Rini's and running away.

The pearl was gone—he knew that without looking. If Rini did not have it, then one of his kind countrymen must have relieved him of it before he came to himself. He looked about in bewilderment, recognizing the room and wondering how he had come there. Then he fell back weakly and slept heavily, this time remembering to cover himself with the blanket.

Two days later he was limping about the street, a shadow of his former self. He began again looking for work. His friendly roommate had made inquiries at Rini's and had learned all about the pearl slug. He had also managed to collect five dollars of Pasquale's wages from Rini, who could not afford to lose his reputation of being a benefactor to his needy countrymen.

On that money Pasquale lived until he found work assisting a successful fish

vender who went uptown to Greenwich Village daily, peddling his fish to prosperous people in the better tenements, who paid good prices. It was Pasquale's business to shout "Fish!" and search the windows on one side of the street for buyers, while his boss cried and sold on the other side. From the start Pasquale received a dollar a day, and began to take an interest in life once more.

During the first week of this new work Pasquale received a letter from Carmelite. She wrote that she was being treated by a doctor in Trieste and was doing chambermaid work in a hotel for the support of herself and children.

The doctor had said that her eyes were not bad, that she would be entirely cured in four months if she took care of herself, and the baby boy's eyes were healing already.

Pasquale puzzled out the letter three times to make sure, before his face broke into a smile and he rushed downstairs to buy a bottle of real Italian wine by way of celebration.

Inspired again by hope, he worked harder, and finally developed an opportunity through which he contracted on time for the pushcart, scale and established business of a prosperous countryman who had made enough money actually to return to Italy, which seemed to be the dream of most of the peddlers Pasquale knew at the fish market.

He had learned where to buy good fish cheap and how to sell at a profit. His simple nature had surmounted his early disappointments and he began again to like New York, looking forward to, and living on, the surety of the arrival of Carmelite and her babies.

As often as twice a month encouraging news came from Carmelite by letter, and after several months Pasquale met an old friend who had just sailed from Trieste and brought news that he had seen her, that she was well and her eyes would be well, like the boy's, in the space of a few weeks.

Pasquale was jubilant. Instead of celebrating with wine, he put the money away against the arrival of his family. He worked even harder at selling, though it seemed easier to him. His cry of

"Fish—fresh fish!" became a song. Once more he was the gay, romantic Pasquale who had waited on the pier at Halifax. His gayness was even greater because of his disappointment. He overrode the undercurrent of doubt with laughter and extravagant dreams.

When at last he heard from Carmelite that her eyes were entirely cured, that they looked as clear as anybody else's, and she was sailing the following week, Pasquale consulted a calendar at the corner ship agent's for a full hour. He calculated and counted, coming at last to the amazing surety that already he had but four days to wait, for it had taken the letter as long to come as it would take Carmelite. He could hardly realize it. Now that Carmelite was actually coming, he felt that it was not true. There was a strange unreality about everything. That warming hope to which he had clung for so long was to leave him shortly. He felt a blank sense of loss in realizing it. Then he thrilled to his blunt finger tips with the dream of Carmelite and the children actually at his side, with him.

Carmelite had saved enough of the money Pasquale had sent to pay her passage. She had written, too, that she had some extra money from tips taken in her chambermaid work. Pasquale figured up carefully and smiled broadly with the realization that he had sixty dollars, almost as much as he had had when he arrived in New York. Truly, fortune had smiled upon him. He was a lucky man. At that moment he was sure he had never known trouble.

Next day he quit work early and went house hunting. He must be prepared for Carmelite and the children. The prices of tenement flats were high, and the places were not all he could wish, but when he found three snug rooms, only two flights up, at the back of a tenement, where they would not be bothered by the noise of the street, he considered that it would be worth sixteen dollars a month to live there with Carmelite and the babies. So he paid a week's rent down and asked the landlord to have the little three-burner gas stove taken out. Then he bought two

charcoal pails for Carmelite to cook on, after the Italian fashion, and furnished the house with four chairs, one apiece, for the baby wouldn't need one, and a marred iron bed, which nevertheless had two brass bulbs on top of the posts and a cute little baby painted in pink on the head of it.

Further than that he would not go without Carmelite's selective suggestion.

Then for the first time since those tantalizing days at Halifax, he considered his own appearance. He still had the red neckerchief he had worn while waiting for Carmelite. It was packed away with the toy boat he had made for Pasquale. But his suit was shabby. There were holes at the knees and elbows, and his trousers legs hung in ribbons. His shoes were all right; he had worn out a pair behind his cart and had bought another with double soles from a man who sold them out of a basket at the market. Socks he had, too, a good stout pair of them without holes, besides the ones he had on; but a hat, a gay one, and a pink-striped shirt—he needed those. If he could get the suit and the hat and shirt all within six dollars, he would still have forty left.

So he sought information from a second generation café idler whose clothes he had noticed particularly.

"What you want is a good working suit," said the aloof young American-Italian in English, which Pasquale followed faultily. "Take a chance over at the Tin Pan. They'll fit you out for five bucks."

"The Teen Pan?" repeated Pasquale wonderingly, carefully inspecting the American cut clothes of his informant. "*Cinque doll*." His eyes brightened a little at mention of the price.

"Sure. You didn't just come over, did you?" asked the youth, with some superiority. "You wops want bargains. That's what the Tin Pan is for."

"Where is it?" asked Pasquale.

"Over on Bayard Street." The youth pointed toward Chinatown.

Pasquale suddenly remembered seeing a street lined with clothes and shoes near the strange little town where the Chinese lived.

He started off at once, turning into Bayard Street and sauntering along the downtown side, looking up at a bewildering array of suits and signs, signs and shoes, hats and haberdashery, most of them hanging outside small cluttered Jewish stores, and all looking a little weather-beaten.

Someone suddenly grabbed his hand, and he looked into the gold-gleaming mouth of a greasy Jew with a matted mustache framing a wide smile.

"Hello! Nica da suit?" said this one of the hundred pullers-in of Bayard Street, who, in sizing up the passers-by and picking the bashful from the bold, had hooked Pasquale. But he hadn't landed him. Pasquale grunted and backed away from the glad hand of good-fellowship. He would look further and see first the suit he wanted.

But the old clothes dealer gripped his hand like a steel trap and tried to drag him into his shop.

"A better suit than you ever saw, for five dollars!" cried the persuasive, energetic salesman, tugging at Pasquale.

"I gotta t'ree doll'," said Pasquale shrewdly, having learned a little in his dealings on the East Side.

"Oh, you reecha da man!" The Jew aped his customer facetiously, having found that a little jolly generally won the attention of the childlike Italians who came to buy on Bayard Street. Then, seriously, he said: "I treat you right. Come inside; I'm a granda da sport, like you, boss."

But he protested too much; Pasquale backed away suspiciously from the gold gleaming teeth and looked up at the next dealer's sign, which read: "Here It Is, Boys, No. 63." He couldn't make it out, but he thought he might fool the dealer into thinking he was trying to pick out a favorite from the painted canvas and gilt glittering signs swaying in the wind along the street to the Bowery, each thrust as far beyond its competitors as possible.

Pasquale wrenched away and brushed past two other pullers-in before he stopped, attracted by a window full of flashy renovated suits, each brightened by a red celluloid rose, surrounded by

garishly green leaves, thrust through the buttonhole.

The proprietor of this store tried to hook Pasquale, but he was wary. He wanted to find a display window where actual prices were marked on the suits. He walked on, resisting all the efforts of the dealers and finding only ornate maple leaves and catchy imitation flowers in place of price marks, until he came to a crowd of men in the middle of the street. He mixed into the open curb market with a hundred or more down-and-outers trading in clothing and small articles of personal adornment, which they carried concealed in their grimy hands or thrown over their arms. One man had a dozen derby hats, one crushed on top of the other, which he wore on his head. He walked up and down, repeating in a solemn singsong: "Pick 'em out, boys; a quarter each."

That was just Pasquale's price, so he reached out and jerked the peddler's sleeve timidly, as a mouse nibbles at cheese in a trap. Feeling the tug on his arm, the Jewish gentleman turned and smiled suavely at Pasquale. He doffed his dozen hats to him graciously and allowed him to inspect and choose.

Pasquale's boyish eye was attracted by a single brown derby mixed in with the lot. He chose that one and, taking off his cap, tried on the stunning headgear.

The peddler put his finger under the hatband because it was two sizes too large, balanced the derby on Pasquale's head, and held it there, assuring him that it fitted perfectly.

Pasquale reached into his pocket with an air of utter satisfaction and brought out his black coin purse, unwinding the string which closed it, and feeling for a twenty-five-cent piece.

"Oh!" exclaimed the peddler, who had sized up his man and waited for the psychological moment. "I got that hat in by mistake. It's a fifty-cent one. I didn't notice." He jerked the hat off Pasquale's head.

Pasquale looked up blankly, then sought further into his purse, as his eyes nibbled at the coveted brown derby, so different from the others. He drew out

forty cents, thrusting the money into the peddler's hand grudgingly and jerking the hat back. He jammed his cap into his pocket and walked off with a satisfied swagger, the brown derby pressing his ears out at right angles.

The peddler, accepting the ten-cent cut in price without a word, stepped into a neighboring basement and mechanically added another brown derby to the stack on his head. Then he mixed again with the crowd, waiting until a second sharp-eyed "dago" should choose for himself from the quarter derbies.

Pasquale passed on through the "Tin Pan Market," mingling with the peddlers bringing in loads of secondhand clothing taken in exchange for tin kitchen utensils, bought cheaply in the neighborhood and carried for trade into thrifty urban communities.

Pasquale was stopped by a bowlegged, shifty-eyed little fellow who leaned against the iron railing around the electric power house at the corner. The man held out a handful of miscellaneous articles of personal apparel consisting of two ready-made ties, a high wing collar, one brace of a pair of suspenders and moth-eaten earmuffs, all serenely secondhand.

"Ten cents for the lot!" he mumbled through a rainbow mustache chewed off zigzag on the right side and stained with tobacco, as he twitched his shaggy eyebrows at Pasquale.

The ties attracted Pasquale and he inspected the other articles curiously. All might be of use to him. He drew out his coin purse, unwound the string methodically and said in English, with an effort, "F-i cent."

"No." The street broker shook his head deliberately, as a trader on the stock exchange, considering the selling price of some valuable security he held. "Eight cents," he said, with the cagey look of a financier driving a rather shrewd bargain.

"No, f-i cent!" Pasquale shook his head and made as if to go away.

"Here, take 'em for five cents," said the defeated dealer precipitately, chewing nervously at the right side of his mustache and glancing across the street



toward an alluring saloon, showing plainly his fear that Pasquale would withdraw the offer or that the saloon would disappear before he could clutch the nickel and place it on the polished bar.

Pasquale paid down the money; the broker pocketed it nonchalantly, as though it were only a trifling matter with him, and sauntered across into Barney's saloon, moving his moist lips and sucking in the right edge of his ragged mustache.

Pasquale pushed the trifles into his pocket with an air of satisfaction and boldly returned to the sidewalk, where he allowed the first "puller-in" to retain his handhold and lead him into his shop.

There he was catechized concerning the amount of money he had. Pasquale very shrewdly kept the sum down to three dollars until the dealer, his mental master, showed him a gorgeous fawn-colored creation with red stripes, calculated in the clothing trade to set any negro's or Italian's heart beating rag-time or *allegro vivo*.

Then Pasquale capitulated and touched the human note for which the dealer had been probing. "How much cost?" he asked eagerly.

"Ten dollars," answered the second-hand man, laying the suit away with care as though such an ordinary fellow could not afford fabric of that price.

"F-i-i' doll'," said Pasquale.

"No, no." The Jew showed gold teeth in a grin and Pasquale realized instantly that he had quite a different fellow to deal with than the amateur peddler of the curb market.

"Seex," he said with constraint.

"No, no," replied the dealer, putting the suit back for the third time.

"Seven," said Pasquale.

"Look here now. That's fine goods." The dealer once more drew out the elegant suit and smoothed his hand over the worn sateen lining. "Swell stuff. You look like a sport!" He held it against Pasquale's shoulder and stood back with eyes sparkling appreciation.

"Seven," repeated Pasquale doggedly, having already gone beyond his price.

"Look at the pockets," said the other, paying no attention to the offer and

pointing to the novelties with which the suit was equipped. The pockets were cut bias, and each was fastened with a flap having three pearlsh buttons set in an exact triangle.

"Seven," repeated Pasquale, his heart leaping as he pictured Carmelite coming off the boat while he stood with one arm carelessly on something and his legs crossed, showing the razorlike creases in his trousers.

The dealer put the suit back in stock abruptly and turned away from Pasquale, beginning to whistle unconcernedly.

"Eight," said Pasquale anxiously, fearing lest the man had changed his mind and wasn't going to sell it at all. His ingenuous nature realized a master in the sophisticated Jew. Shrewd in the Italian way, Pasquale could not understand this cold, calm salesman who, because of his racial endowments, could hold out against offers however glittering until he had the price he knew would come.

"I wouldn't sell that suit for a cent less than nine dollars, and then I'd be losing money; but I'd like to see you look like a sport," said the Jew, turning suavely.

Pasquale repeated his offer of eight. After the suit had been pulled out and put back into stock three times, they finally agreed upon eight dollars and a half, which Pasquale paid gladly, congratulating himself on successfully beating down the man, as he left the shop.

Already Pasquale had begun to drop in at the steamship agent's office once or twice a day to get news of the arrival of the boat. There were but two days left, and the hours of those became like minutes as Pasquale packed them full with industrious action. He no sooner backed his fish cart into the basement where he kept it than he raced off to the new house to rearrange a chair, and ran down to buy a supply of charcoal and macaroni. The house furnished with charcoal and macaroni, he made another trip for matches. Then he tried the springs of the bed and marveled at its softness compared to the board cot on which he slept. Then he hurried to the

pushcarts on Grand Street and bought a sparkling breastpin of brilliants to present to Carmelite on her arrival. Next, he went to the ship agent's; then back to the flat; out after some oilcloth to cover the hole in the kitchen floor; upstairs to see a woman about buying milk for the baby; downstairs to price wine for the banquet he would have in his own home that day of their arrival.

Then, on one of his trips to the steamship office, he learned that the boat was already coming up the harbor. Fearing that he would be late, as he had been at Halifax, Pasquale rushed to his room, donned his new suit, tie, fresh socks, clean shirt and brown derby. Thrusting a cheap cigarette between his trembling lips, he jumped on a car and rode to the Battery.

He had already rehearsed the details of that meeting, and the steamship agent had provided him with a ticket of admission to Ellis Island.

He boarded the ferry and started for the immigrant station, straining his eyes to read the name on two big ships being towed into the harbor. He asked excitedly of fellow countrymen for information. Yes, that big black-nosed boat with the three red funnels was the boat bringing Carmelite with the children.

Pasquale stared at it until his eyes glistened moistly and his arms reached out instinctively toward it. Then the ferryboat bumped into its slip at Ellis Island. Pasquale surged onto shore with the crowd and thrust his ticket at a blue-coated officer who reminded him vaguely of the man he had struck at Halifax: he had that same steel-cold turnkey's eye and severely cropped mustache. Pasquale sneaked past him, fearing to be called back. He went through a long shed and came out in a waiting room where a hundred jabbering Italians were already gathered, mothers weeping, men laughing hysterically, others calmly pointing their mustaches and many sitting silent, depressed. Pasquale joined them, talking with anybody and everybody. Though he himself had passed through the immigrant office at Halifax, he learned more about rules and regu-

lations in listening for ten minutes to the excited exclamations about him than he had ever dreamed of.

The word "trachoma" came to his ears several times. The words "not enough money," and "sent back," made him flush and hurry to ask the uniformed interpreter how long before the boat would be in and the passengers landed.

"Sit down," said the interpreter. "They're being taken off the big boat in barges now. In five minutes they will land here, and then they will pass right through to the doctors, upstairs through the examiners, and then on into this room, and you'll meet them right here all right."

"And Carmelite's name, is it on the passenger list?" asked Pasquale eagerly.

"Yes, yes," the interpreter repeated mechanically. "They always arrive. You know she's on that boat. Sit down. Everybody gets through and comes to this waiting room—except those that are detained."

The word "detained" had a nasty sting in it. Pasquale winced, and to forget the hysterical tremors that shook him, he turned to whoever was at hand and repeated the news that they were landing. He talked too much, like everybody else, except those who sat in corners and did not talk enough.

Then there was a sudden quiet. Below could be heard the heavy clatter of human feet encased in rough, peasant shoes hitting the floor hard, as those who walk in furrows behind ploughs, those who never glide across deep-napped rugs.

"They are coming off the boat," the whisper went around.

A little later: "The doctors are making their examinations."

An interminable while, and then a crazed cry from a lean, blue-nosed Italian, one of those who had sat silent in a corner with his eyes fixed on the passageway through which the immigrants were to arrive, as he leaped from his seat and threw himself upon an elderly woman and a red-cheeked boy who straggled through the passage between heavy bundles, looking about them dazedly, the first of the shipload to be passed into the new country.

Pasquale, a lump in his throat, squeezed his eyes and hands shut, then opened them with a gulp and looked. An instant later he sprang from his place with arms stretched wide as though he would embrace the world.

There stood Carmelite, holding her baby on one arm, her boy on her hip, a big bundle of clothes between them. Josephina was at her side, tugging at an immense two-handled satchel. They looked about wide-eyed. Carmelite's lower lip trembled, her mouth drew down, tears came to her dream-lit brown eyes, and then she saw Pasquale. He leaped from his place and grasped the boy and the baby, hugging them to him with Carmelite. Relieved of all mental and physical strain, as Pasquale took a child in each arm and stooped to kiss Josephina, clinging shyly to her mother's homespun skirt, Carmelite burst into tears. An instant later Pasquale, still holding the baby, was hugging Carmelite close to him and patting her nervously on the back as he babbled soft, foolish words in her ear, telling her that they were going to be happy, so happy in this America of their dreams.

## V

In the balcony above, two young American tourists tittered at the ardent embrace. The overflowing of pent-up emotion expressed by the Italian lovers after a year of trial and trouble was entertaining to them.

It was no laughing matter to Pasquale and Carmelite, though they did laugh hysterically as a relief to their overstrained nerves.

Taking the big bundle and the two-handled satchel, Pasquale pushed through the gesticulating throng of countrymen and motioned Carmelite to follow with the children.

They passed through the long shedded runway and tumbled down the gang-plank to the waiting ferry.

Sitting between their bundles and babies in the dark, smoky boat, Pasquale bought oranges from an extortionate vender and pared them, Italian

fashion, before handing out halves to the two older children and Carmelite.

The ferry ride was joyous; instead of looking out of the windows, Pasquale and Carmelite gazed into one another's eyes, and the children were silently absorbed in the oranges.

At the New York pier Pasquale shouldered his bundles and pushed through the crowd, Carmelite pressing against him for fear of being separated. They passed along the lined sidewalks, resisted the persuasive offers of Italian cabmen and climbed the steps to the elevated trains. As they stood on the platform, grinning to each other and stretching strained muscles, Pasquale, expanding his chest, waved his hand toward the tall buildings as though they were his, and Carmelite instinctively dodged, afraid they might fall.

When they were seated in an elevated car Pasquale spoke of the ride they would have had together from Halifax to New York, had it not been for Carmelite's bad eyes and the good eyes of the immigration officers.

"It is better like this," he said. "We have a place all ready to go to, and it will be much cheaper; and your eyes—they shine as I have always seen them."

"I would like to see the new house," said Carmelite, lowering her eyes consciously as Pasquale pressed her hand.

"It is not a house. Nobody lives in houses here in New York," said Pasquale. "They all live in flats. Sixteen dollars a month for people like us; twenty and even twenty-four dollars a month for the bankers and wine dealers. Some day we will have a twenty-dollar one."

"Yes," breathed Carmelite hopefully, looking out of the window as curiously as the child Josephina. "It must be like living in a hotel. I have worked in a hotel, and now it will be nice to just live in one, with my own little family."

"It will be fine," said Pasquale. "There is water right in the kitchen, and in the winter heat comes up through pipes. It is a very nice place to live, but of course we will get a twenty-dollar one some day."

"Yes," said Carmelite.

They left the elevated at Chatham Square and walked through Chinatown to Mulberry Bend.

Pasquale motioned with his head at the strange signs and show windows as they passed through the alley-like streets of the Orientals, and Carmelite snatched hasty glimpses of the windows, smiling to Pasquale as though she appreciated the novelty greatly, though her eyes saw nothing but those three sweet rooms where they were to live all together, in the new America.

"You see, this is quite like Italy," said Pasquale, as they turned into Mulberry Bend and trailed past clam carts, fruit, vegetable and drygoods hand wagons.

Pasquale nodded to a passing acquaintance, and Carmelite looked up at him with pride, secure in the thought that he had already made friends in this new, strange land, and that he was well known.

Then they came to the tenement where Pasquale had rented the rooms. He ran ahead like an eager boy, and Carmelite stumbled after with the children.

Pasquale threw open the door of the new home and flung his brown derby in after the bundles with a prideful flourish of his hand.

Carmelite entered, released her children's hands, dropped the baby on the bed with a thankful cry, and held her arms wide to Pasquale.

He rushed into them, clasping her close, and they stood in a tender, swaying embrace while little Pasquale played with the sheet iron shutter on the sticky new charcoal pot and Josephina took advantage of the moment to mother the babe on the bed.

"It is heaven!" breathed Carmelite devoutly.

"The floor," said Pasquale—"it is all wood. No dirt to sweep up. And there are windows." He waved his hand toward a rain-streaked pane, eighteen inches square.

"It is heaven!" repeated Carmelite. She passed her palm caressingly over the calcimined wall and said softly: "Such smooth walls. It is like a castle."

"And now we must have dinner—eh?" Pasquale caught up his boy and smothered him in a bear hug.

"I'm not hungry," said the boy, struggling to get down and explore a neatly tied bag of charcoal.

"Spaghetti with clams, Carmelite," cried Pasquale, with a mysterious nod toward the kitchen, "I have some small ones I got at the market, just this morning—oh, so small and so sweet!"

Carmelite beamed her reply and stepped into the kitchen. Pasquale watched her as she pried into the packages he had provided. Her strong peasant figure bent with girlish grace as she stooped to undo the fascinating packages, mostly wrapped in newspapers; her mellow, motherly face lighted as she uncovered pots and pans, macaroni and charcoal in a cluttered heap, as Pasquale had dumped them into the bare room.

"And *delle bracirole di vitello alla Milanese!*" exclaimed Pasquale, as Carmelite removed the covering from a pound of paper-thin veal cutlets.

"Yes, yes," she said eagerly, loosening little Pasquale's fingers from the charcoal pot, placing it snugly in a gaping grate hole and starting a fire in it with paper and charcoal.

"It is just like home," said Pasquale, standing broad in the doorway, a flush on his firm cheeks as he watched his trim, busy little wife bending and rising, skillfully putting the room and provisions in order.

"It is better than home!" cried Carmelite, turning up her starry eyes and her clinging mouth to his kiss.

"We shall be so happy in this America."

"It goes to the head like strong wine," answered Carmelite.

When the charcoal in the pot glowed a rich red Pasquale squatted down on the floor beside it, held the busy boy on one knee and hugged Josephina close to his breast, while Carmelite nursed the baby, started the second charcoal pot burning, stirred the spaghetti and breaded the veal.

Her active spirit pervaded the room. The bare kitchen became a home in housing a Madonna.



A kiss for Pasquale, a hug for the boy, who had discovered Pasquale's fish knife, a suggestion to Josephina, who left Pasquale's knee on short bread-cutting and cutlet-turning excursions, and then Mother Carmelite, her face burning from bending, heat and excitement, cried, "Dinner!"

They sat down at the dollar deal table, just as Pasquale had planned it all at the little Halifax inn. Before him Carmelite and a steaming bowl of spaghetti, dressed with splendid little clams, tomato sauce and five cents' worth of chicken giblets. The boy on his left, Josephina on his right. At last Pasquale looked at the dream picture his mind had framed for so many months.

With the liberality of a true father Pasquale heaped their plates, joked Pasquale, Jr., on his appetite, urged Carmelite and Josephina to eat more, and repeated that he had never tasted such a meal. After dinner he brought out real Venetian chocolates, wrapped in tinfoil. The children's eyes bulged. Carmelite smiled indulgently as she allowed them five pieces each. The evening ended by all going to bed in the same room, the baby, Pasquale and Carmelite in the wide bed with the pink Cupid painted on it, and little Pasquale and Josephina in a folding cot contrivance.

In the morning there was another wonderful meal, and then Pasquale sprang his surprise. He was no niggardly husband. There was always more room for sunshine in his soul. Reunion after a year should be marked by an event. After breakfast, instead of trudging off to work, Pasquale took the whole family to the Bronx zoo.

There they had popcorn, thrills, peanuts and laughter, quantities of each, crowded into a single day. They went on the subway. That was exciting to the children. Carmelite was only a little awed by it. She and Pasquale sat close together. A man and a woman sat across the aisle with a baby not half as pretty as theirs. They saw a crisp American schoolgirl with pink bows, and their glances strayed fondly to Josephina, who would be an American and wear shiny shoes and gay bows.

A blank-faced woman lifted the skirt of her modish gown as she passed the Pompillis and stared at them with a critically cold eye. Pasquale and Carmelite were not awed by her; they drew closer together and said things softly to one another about the differences between people rich in money and those rich in love.

In the bird house, at the zoo, they saw a pair of beautiful rainbow doves billing and cooing. Pasquale pressed Carmelite's hand.

They sat for half an hour before a bed of crocuses and tulips while the children played in the grass. Neither said a word, but there was something about the flowers, the bursting season and their being together that made words superfluous.

On the way home Pasquale, Jr., fed Josephina peanuts as a man had fed the monkeys, and they all laughed. Everybody in the car laughed. That made Pasquale very proud, and Carmelite shyly anxious about the spoiling of her big-eyed boy.

On reaching Mulberry Bend they bought waxy artichokes and lacquered red pomegranates from pushcarts. They stopped at a store for a whole sausage in tinfoil and some potatoes. At a shop next door Pasquale purchased a blue-flowered plant in a little red pot. They divided the packages between them and hurried home, five children back from their holiday.

They put the plant on the window sill, and the memory of that day bloomed as radiantly as the blue flowers. It had been perfect. They had been together. A pleasant-faced American had patted Pasquale, Jr., on the head and given him a shiny dime. Two nice old ladies with grandmotherly smiles had gazed long and tenderly at Josephina in the car. It had been a perfect day. They had been together, all of them, all of the Pompillis.

## VI

NEXT day Pasquale went to work, very prosaically. He had had his day, and there were more to come, many

more, as many as he liked. His song of "Fish" became an anthem. Early in the morning he pushed his cart to the door of his own home and called Carmelite and the children down to see the shimmering load. Then he told how the six-dollar investment would increase to eight or nine by the end of the day, and how on the morrow, Saturday, they would all go together to a live poultry market and buy a pair of chickens for the Sunday meal. He let Carmelite select three of the fattest fish for the evening meal.

He worked joyfully that day, giving good weight and getting rid of his load before three in the afternoon.

Then at night they all went to a moving picture and vaudeville show. They sat together in the long, narrow, stuffy theater and applauded the Italian comedian, with his funny red wax nose and his voluminous, greasy dressing robe. The jokes were naive and familiar. It was a very pleasant party. The picture films were marvels. Little Pasquale wanted to know what became of the soldiers and Indians that dashed by on the screen, and Josephina told him they went to the happy hunting ground, as somebody had read to her out of a story book. But Pasquale, Jr., was not convinced. He wanted to go behind the scenes after the show and see if he could get one of the feathers from a warrior's helmet.

"Plenty of feathers tomorrow, Pasquale, at the *vivo pollo* shop," laughed his father.

They went home and slept in serene security, all in one room. At dawn Pasquale was up and out, headed for the fish market. Again he returned to show his day's stock, and once more Carmelite selected a fine fish for lunch.

When Pasquale returned in the early afternoon with his empty barrow, which he stored in the damp, dark cellar of the house, he was radiant. Profits had been good, and Carmelite was waiting for him with shining cheeks, the children all dressed for the afternoon marketing.

They joined the Mulberry Street throng and bargained at the pushcarts, laying in a stock of dried mushrooms,

figs and early grapes. Carmelite bought a whole apronful of lettuce leaves for ten cents, and before going to the live poultry place they had to make a trip home to unload.

Then they started out again, and, locating a loud red sign portraying two cocks fighting, and reading "*Vivo Pollo*," entered the small square shop full of floating feathers, dust and filth. Hens cackled, roosters crowed, pigeons cooed, guinea hens shrieked, ducks quacked and geese hissed. The room seemed like a condensed farmyard with megaphone attachments. Two squat, thick-skirted women with pock-marked faces and a long, cadaverous man with a thin nose and watery eyes blinked through the flying debris and bargained with buyers. Successful shoppers pushed toward the fresh open air, holding struggling fowls by their shiny yellow or black legs. Salesmen fluffed up feathers to show the pink skin beneath; buyers poked fingers into the plump chicken breasts; the air was alive with active bargaining.

"You see, this is better than Latisano," exclaimed Pasquale, "more to choose from, all sorts."

"And more expensive?" asked Carmelite timidly.

They found a pair of plump pullets in a wicker cage and made overtures for their purchase. The chickens were brought out, punched and pinched and bartered over, until the price was finally fixed at a dollar and a quarter for the pair, and the Pompillis pushed their way out with smiling faces and their Sunday dinner.

That night they went to a real marionette show and sat on hard benches in a little attic playhouse, watching the bold brass manikins clash armor and swords and shout challenges in abysmal, sepulchral tones.

"You see, it is just like Italy," said Pasquale.

"Yes," glowed Carmelite. "I like the marionettes better than the moving pictures; they are so much easier to understand, and so much grander and funnier."

Next morning they went to mass together in a dim, restful cathedral with

their countrymen. Their prayers were long and fervent as they knelt side by side on the rough wooden footstool, thinking of the children safe in the snug little home, and hushed and humbled and happy in the House of the Lord.

After the chicken dinner, with red hot tomato dressing and a snappy lettuce salad dressed with green oil and purple wine vinegar, the Pompillis, in their best, went out for a walk. They strolled along leisurely in the full spring day, smiling to every friendly passer-by and stopping to talk to several ship companions. The city life was delightful. In the country outside Latisano they never saw so many people except at the yearly fair.

"It is like a fair here in New York every day!" exclaimed Pasquale.

"Yes," said Carmelite. "But it is good to rest and look on green things once in a while."

"We have looked on green things all our lives. The change is good," answered Pasquale.

They were stopped by Pietro, the shoeblack, who had not seen Carmelite since her arrival.

"How is everything going?" asked Pasquale.

Pietro shook his head dismally.

"I have no family to make me forget," he said.

"But what are you doing?"

"Selling ice and charcoal. I lost the shoeblackening job. I could not kill myself," said Pietro, pointing down a ragged, dirt-strewn cellarway to a damp hole above which hung an empty charcoal bag and a crudely lettered sign reading:

PIETRO

Ice & Wood

Beneath the sign a slate and a slate pencil hung ready for orders that seldom came.

"Is this business no good, either?"

"No good." Pietro showed his palms in disgust. He reached down and pinched Pasquale, Jr.'s, round red cheek between his grimy fingers. "Some good Italian wine, *bambino*?" he asked, extending the invitation to Carmelite and

Pasquale through the boy. "I have some from Milano. It cost forty cents a litre. Will you have a taste?"

"Yes," said Papa Pompilli promptly.

The little family trooped down the basement stairs behind Pietro's clumping boots. There the parent Pompillis with the baby sat on Pietro's rusty-sprung cot, and Josephina and little Pasquale squatted on round bundles of kerosene-dipped pine wood, while Pietro uncovered a wicker-cased flagon hidden in a corner beneath a heap of musty clothing.

He had one glass and a tin cup, which went the rounds. The room was chilly and forlorn. Pietro crouched like an anæmic toad in a corner and wailed about his troubles in America. Already he had caught the going-back fever.

The Pompillis were very glad to leave the iceman shivering there in his wretched cellar. They burst into the filtered sunshine of the streets, drew deep breaths and tried to forget. For they were very happy.

Pasquale, Jr., and Josephina danced to a street organ shyly, and their parents stood by proudly, glad that their children should dance the quaint steps of their fathers instead of the shuffling, Bowery-esque shamble of the second generation Italian-Americans thronging the street.

Afterward Papa Pompilli regaled them all with penny acid drinks at a corner fountain, where the sharp soda had eaten a hole an inch deep in the marble slab. Pasquale had his shoes shined for two cents, standing on the curb while Carmelite talked with a woman who had come over in the steerage with her. Then he led his family home, feeling quite the American family man.

At the corner they stopped for a pint of blue milk for the baby, and the day was complete.

During the week that followed, Carmelite found difficulty in providing fresh eggs for the family, and Pasquale put off an excursion to Coney Island because of the carfare and the fact that business was not as brisk as usual.

But they were very happy, all but the baby, who whimpered a little on the blue milk diet.

"Try canned milk," suggested a neighbor.

Carmelite shrugged her shoulders emphatically. No, cow's milk was quite good enough. But the infant began to look spongy and flaccid, and its crying broke Pasquale's nights of rest, so his feet lagged and he unconsciously shortened his route.

Carmelite spent so much time tenderly jouncing the fretful baby that her days became too short. She managed, however, to visit a marvelous five and ten cent store several times for tawdry bargains, and once walked a mile up-town to a big, cheap department store.

Pasquale did not suggest that she stay at home with the baby. Babies were always healthy, and Carmelite must enjoy New York. She had had enough of work. He was glad when a good day enabled him to take the family around the corner to a moving picture or marionette show.

Carmelite missed the mellow Italian wine to which she was accustomed, but Pasquale's throat was already hardened to harsh California claret, and he only laughed at the faces Carmelite made over her wine. Real wine was prohibitive in price; that was one of the drawbacks of New York.

The children fretted at being kept in the house so much because Carmelite could not go out often with the sick baby and did not like to have them go alone. Pasquale and Carmelite considered the subject of schools. They asked a native politician who had been very friendly from the first. He told them that in summer there were not many classes, that the children would have to wait until fall, when they would be sure of a half-day's schooling at least.

The streets became a problem. Carmelite could not keep the children housed like plants; she must let them run; though her heart was not as easy as it had been when they had played outdoors in the country. There were wagons, street cars, autos, bad companions and many other things to be feared.

Carmelite's days became anxious. Through a period of wet weather Pasquale came home with soaking clothes

and soggy shoes. It was often eleven o'clock at night before Carmelite had dried them and given the baby its last bottle.

It was well that they had gone to picture shows and parks at the outset, for now life was becoming complex for the Pompillis. Carfare became an item, when sickness took the surplus. Pasquale could not work as hard as formerly. His nights were restless, his days feverish. City life was a continual struggle. He missed the angelus hour of the country.

One day, when Carmelite ran out for a pint of blue milk for the baby, she found Pasquale, Jr., in a dark hallway smoking a cigarette with some older boys. She jerked him home, thrashed him, sent him to bed, and then sat down in the kitchen, weeping, until Pasquale returned.

She did not tell him about the cigarette. The boy had been punished enough, but she did sit and hold Pasquale's hand fervently as the talk drifted to the cool meadows out of Latisano.

"How sharp the factory whistles here at evening sound!" said Carmelite. "How different from the mellow bell in old Saint Bertholda on the hilltop!"

"Yes," cried Pasquale. "Have you, too, thought of that?"

"Often."

"Some day we will go back," he said softly, pressing her hand.

It was the first actual word of discontent. The spoken word drew them closer together; for the moment they did not notice the fretful cries of the baby in the next room.

Josephina came anxiously to the door, carrying the worrying infant.

"Mamma," she said, "he cries so."

Carmelite wafted away the dreams with a sigh and wearily took the baby, jouncing it on her knees, adjusting its bib and burying the wan face in her bosom, wishing that she could still nurse the little one, for nature had given her but two brief months.

"Give her the bottle," said Pasquale, annoyed by the cries.

Josephina rinsed the baby's bottle in sudsy dishwater and filled it with cheap



milk from a chipped granite pail. She pushed an unwashed nipple over the neck of the bottle and held it before the baby's lips. But the little hands, clawing the air, pushed it away frantically.

"What's the matter?" asked Pasquale, as he noticed anxious motherly looks on the faces of Carmelite and Josephina.

"No good milk," said Carmelite. "It is not like the cow milk in Latisano."

"Josephus, down the alley, keeps a goat, in the rag shop," suggested Pasquale. "Maybe I could get some milk."

"It is more money than cow milk. Ten cents a quart!" cried Carmelite. "Besides, he has not much to spare. I asked."

"Put some sugar in the bottle," suggested Pasquale, thinking of babies only as temperamental little mechanisms that sugar always put in order.

"No, she doesn't like that any better. I have tried it. Today I gave her a piece of banana and she would not eat even that." Carmelite lowered her face over the struggling, screaming infant. She put down the bottle and raised tragic eyes to Pasquale's. "The baby is sick!" she exclaimed.

## VII

A MONTH went by. The baby had become a skeleton. Pasquale had spent some of his savings on native doctors and medicine. Carmelite in despair had gone to a free dispensary, but no relief came.

The baby was dying. The boy was running wild in the streets. Only Josephina stayed at home, to help as she might.

A settlement worker found Pasquale, Jr., shooting craps for pennies in an alley with some second generation boys and took him home. Carmelite wrung her hands. She could not look after the boy and the baby, too.

"Your husband should try to control him," suggested the settlement worker in Italian.

"But he has not time. He is at work before the sun is up. He comes home

late and tired. It is not easy walking the streets and shouting 'Fish' with the hot summer sun beating out one's brains."

"Something must be done," said the settlement worker, looking around the wretched house, which Josephina had made as presentable as possible.

"I know it, I know." Carmelite wept futilely.

The settlement worker spied the charcoal pots in the empty grate hole. She seized upon the antiquated cooking method with ardor.

"You must not cook like that. You have come to this country to improve your condition. Charcoal fires are dangerous, except out of doors. You might all be killed by the gas some night. It is dangerous."

"Is that so?" said Carmelite.

"Yes, you must cook with gas. You will find, my dear friend," said the settlement worker, "that modern methods of cleanliness and efficiency will work wonders with your household. Your husband must be well fed, your children well cared for. That sick baby must have a clean dress on."

She took the infant with the hands of a trained nurse and pointed at its soiled clothes.

"Clean linen is of great importance with a baby."

"But Josephina is washing the other dress now. It will be ready for the baby tomorrow."

"The other dress! Have you only two?"

"That is all," said Carmelite humbly. She had brought up two babies in Italy on a wardrobe no more extensive; she rather resented the woman's patronizing interference. After all, it was her baby, and she had been doing her best. But she was willing to learn; she had come to America partly for that.

"You are sadly in need of help," said the settlement worker. "I will assist you."

She set about rearranging the kitchen commodities and directing Carmelite in mopping up the floor, while the baby lay crying on the bed in the other room.

Carmelite finally broke away and ran

to her baby. The settlement worker followed her.

She looked at the one small window in the bedroom, glanced at the two beds and then asked severely: "How many people sleep here?"

"Why, all of us," answered Carmelite, wonderingly.

"All of you! The boy, the girl, the baby, the husband and you?" She threw up her hands in dismay. "Five in one room? It is awful." She turned back the warm but untidy bedclothes, threw off a dirty blanket Carmelite had not had time to wash and repeated in English, "Ignorance—ignorance."

Carmelite did not understand, but she knew the superior lady was displeased with her and her methods of house-keeping.

"You must change this arrangement at once," said the settlement worker. "We will move this cot into the kitchen."

"But I need the room to wash and cook in," said Carmelite.

"Then you must get a larger apartment."

"But the rent!" cried Carmelite. "We are already paying too much. In Latisano we had a whole house for nothing on the farm where we worked."

"But you are not now in Latisano."

"I know. That is why we have to sleep all in one room. It is the way they all do, in New York."

"Oh, you are impossible!" cried the settlement worker impatiently. She took out her notebook and recorded a painstaking description and inventory of the room for her report at the charities office, while Carmelite sat jouncing the baby and trying to force a sweetened pacifier between her thin blue lips.

Carmelite watched the inquisitive investigator out of the tail of her eyes. It was evident that the educated woman was displeased with her. But, after all, was it any of her business?

Pasquale, Jr., was in some mischief in the kitchen. Josephina was trying to cope with him. The baby squalled. Carmelite's patience was at its end.

She rose, trembling, to her feet and

interrupted the settlement worker in her painstaking account.

"Will you please go now? I have work to do, and I will have to make the beds up again, now that you have mussed them up," she said with suppressed passion. Her home had been invaded, and the presence of the woman was more than her strained nerves could stand.

"Oh, very well," snapped the settlement worker, closing her book and rising quickly. "That is the trouble with you people. You do not wish to be helped. You want to remain in ignorance."

"Go, go, please," said Carmelite, controlling herself as she threw the baby over one shoulder and snatched Pasquale away from Josephina, whose hair he had been pulling.

The settlement worker looked down at the children. "You had better take better care of these children in the future," she said severely, "or the society will take them away from you."

"Take my children away?" cried Carmelite, smothering the baby to her and clinging close to Pasquale's hand as Josephina slipped slyly behind her skirt.

"Yes. If it hadn't been for me, your boy could have been arrested for gambling in the alley." The settlement worker swept through the door. "I will keep watch of them," she shouted back.

When she was gone, Josephina slipped away from her mother's skirts and remade the beds. Carmelite scolded Pasquale severely and locked the door so he could not go out. Then she sat down to await her husband. She looked at the blank wall before her, a dumb, throbbing pain in her mind. Slowly the wall became a green meadow. There was a little peasant house and a cow. No strange woman floated through the fields, only stout, friendly faces, of neighboring peasants on the Latisano farm.

Tears were coursing gently down Carmelite's cheeks and she was unmindful of the baby's crying as Pasquale pushed open the door, clumped in and sat down on a kitchen chair. He looked worn, tired.

"Business not so good today. My

feet hurt," said Pasquale. "I could not walk so far, or shout so loud."

"And other things not so good," said Carmelite. Then she told him about young Pasquale and the settlement worker.

An hour later, when the boy's sobbing had ceased after the beating he had received from his nerve-spent father, Carmelite rubbed Pasquale's swollen feet and they talked softly of Latisano.

"They say it is cold here in the winter," Carmelite shivered.

"Yes, yes," said Pasquale, shuddering with the memory of those congealing days when he had opened oysters at Rini's.

"You still have sixty dollars saved?" asked Carmelite timidly.

"Why, yes, sixty-five!" cried Pasquale, hopefully.

"They said at the hotel in Trieste, where I worked while my eyes were curing, that I did my work well, and that I could come back whenever I wanted to."

"Yes," said Pasquale thoughtfully, knowing what she meant, his shoulders broadening a bit. "Yes, you could do that. But we could go direct to the farm."

"That would be very nice."

"But it would cost one hundred dollars."

"That is only thirty-five more than you have already."

"But thirty-five dollars is a great deal of money when some days I am sick."

"Yes. It is a great deal of money. But you could pay it back."

"If I could borrow it first, yes, I could pay it back. I would work very hard on the farm in Latisano."

"Nick or Angelo or Pietro or Giovanni might loan it to you," suggested Carmelite.

"Not Pietro; you saw how poor he was in his cellar. Giovanni is stiff-necked—Angelo would laugh at me, and Nick, the fool, has gone to the rocky country here in America, to scratch stones with a hoe and starve."

"Yet it is very cold here in the winter," said Carmelite.

"Yes, it is very cold," repeated Pasquale.

## VIII

WEEKS of weary work, and still Pasquale was no nearer Latisano. Fall had come; the baby had been holding its own with the cooler weather, but Carmelite was giving out under the strain of the long summer. Pasquale smiled no more. He was hopeless, helpless. Tenement life in the city, long hours of work, had broken his spirit. He was anxious to quit and get back to the countryside of Italy, where work and life were known quantities. His ambition was gone. Now he had but a desperate desire to get Carmelite and the children home; the baby, too, he hoped.

Every morning before the stars had finished their work Pasquale had begun his. Early hours for catching and selling fish are traditional, possibly because of the close association of fish and early worms.

Pasquale was among the earliest. At the foot of Fulton Street, where wobbly, tossing tubs bump the wharves, he slipped through throngs of deep-chested seamen in sweaters, toting waterlogged baskets of glistening fish from the ships' holds. He envied them their work; they were strong and happy, living their life on the sea that he loved, and once or twice a week unloading at the fish market, nonchalantly dumping their baskets of fish, hoisted from their holds, into dripping barrows and trundling them to the dealers' stalls from four till ten in the morning.

Pasquale sauntered through rows and rows of freshly, crisply stocked stalls, where pompino and bullhead rubbed fins, where flippant shrimps flirted with clams, a fish market for an artist to paint in all its gleaming, glistening color—the sheen of lacquer on red fish, boldly Japanese, the gleam of green trout, the soft gray of Spanish mackerel, mossy, mottled lobsters, pinkish scallops, slippery eels, white-bellied flounders and calico bass. Food for eye and mouth; good food, if one except the chill, clammy

corner where Pasquale gathered with his kind, Italians and Jews, huddled with their zinc-lined baskets, hovering like Mother Carey's chickens waiting for the market to throw out her cases of damaged, unpopular and sometimes spoiled sea food.

These buzzards of the market had clumped their methodic, heavy-footed way through the dark from Mulberry and Orchard, Sullivan and Rivington Streets, each shouldering his empty fish basket or pushing his cart, to gather in groups about brusque dealers auctioning undesirable fish after the old Dutch method of starting the goods at a prohibitive point and gradually reducing it until a possible price is reached.

As the dealer guardedly opened each dripping, ice-packed box, his petty customers pulled out fish, poked them for soft spots, sniffed at them, and if the bargain was good the purchaser sold shares to others who had not the price of a full box. If the bargain and the fish were bad the buyer was left alone in his misfortune.

But fish sold to the buzzard buyers at Fulton Market are not often bad; just doubtful, or merely stale. It is unprofitable to sell decayed fish, but the peddler must live, and if good spoil on his hands and he can palm them off on the unsuspecting customer—well, life is a question of the fittest surviving, and everybody must put forth his individual effort to live.

It was Pasquale's custom to leave his cart standing empty on a side street while he hovered about the fish auction and pounced on offered lots that were big, showy and cheap. He never divided his bargains; he took his risks alone, and seldom lost, for Pasquale was shrewd, sharp; he had learned in America that he could not afford to be too scrupulous if the fish looked large and the price small.

Each day at dawn he could be found working over his barrow, the day's fish, already bought, lying steaming and flaccid in their box of melted ice beside him. Dexterously he flipped them over, sorting out the fattest, putting their best fins forward, and ranging them shrewdly on his dripping, scale-incrusted cart.

He worked like a zealot, wasting nothing, for Pasquale sorely needed each penny of profit. The baby was no better, little Pasquale had begun to get red eyes again, and Carmelite was wasting away with sickness for a sight of Latisano. Pasquale, too, felt the urge stronger every day to get back to bask in the Italian sunshine and dry out the damp, heavy congestion in his lungs.

His sixty-five dollars in the bank of Sunseri, although he had conscientiously tried to increase it, had dwindled; and now winter was shaking the door with a sample storm which made Carmelite look gaunt and haggard.

Pasquale Pompilli was desperate. He skulked home each night with his empty cart and a dollar or two profit, his body numb with fatigue, eyes strained and red-rimmed from rubbing out the sleep with salty hands, and racking pains in his chest, each breath cutting like a knife. Then, hardest of all, he had to part with all of his profit for food and rent, poor food and high rent, and Italy remained as far off as ever.

But Pasquale had been growing. He was catching on to American methods. He began to take chances. Twice he made a clear profit of five dollars on boxes of fish so spoiled that no other buzzard buyer dared handle them. These substantial additions to his savings gave him the courage of despair. A hundred dollars was all he asked. That would take the whole family by steerage to Trieste and leave him fifteen dollars carfare to the farm, more than he needed, or as capital to keep the family, so Carmelite would not have to work at the hotel while he was gaining a new foothold in some sunny Southern business.

October came, and Carmelite herself was down on the straw-stuffed cot. Josephina ran the house. Little Pasquale played in the streets.

Pasquale's purse and energy were drained. He appealed to a charitable society for aid. The society sent an inspector, who found and reported pitiable conditions. A second emissary called and bore back the discouraging report that Pasquale Pompilli had almost seventy dollars in the savings bank,



that he possessed a reputation for shrewdness in business and seemed to be only another blundering impostor who wanted something for nothing. The society promptly washed its immaculate hands of the Pompillis, and Pasquale, instead of depositing money that week, stood in line with his tightly clenched bankbook and drew ten dollars from his account.

As his financial feet slipped, and retreat to Italy loomed like an impossible Gibraltar, Pasquale fought like a cornered man. He played give and take with the city slums. He snooped among the boxes of fish each morning, possibly watching for a chance to slip off with one unseen. He never knew his own mind exactly in those days. He located beforehand boxes that would sell cheap, and took long chances on fish he had to stuff with cracked ice to keep from collapsing before he could sell them.

He had learned his lesson of luck at Rini's. Luck amounted to nothing unless a man worked and schemed and in some clever manner secured luck for himself.

He tampered unskillfully with his weighing scales and sought new parts of town in the anxious hope of getting rid of his poor stock to people who did not know him and had no reason to suspect.

Each day the market grew more sickening. His constantly wet feet kept him always in a feverish condition, and his chronic cold became so bad that he often had to turn away while making a sale and cough until he thought his lungs would burst.

As a dull pain crept from his chest to his head he reeled into a doctor's office on his way home one night and heard the dread sentence pronounced:

"Consumption. Go back home—to Italy."

That night the doctor spent the dollar, which would have bought chicken and some real Italian wine for Carmelite and the baby, for bananas and beer. But East Side doctors, too, must live.

Pasquale made no excuses that night as he took home half a pound of spaghetti and gave it to Josephina to cook. He sat on the edge of Carmelite's bed and

waited blankly until Josephina came in with a big bowl of steaming macaroni. Then he urged Carmelite to eat, and even fed some to the baby himself.

During the evening the baby seemed happy, and Carmelite and Pasquale talked hopefully, thinking that the little one had passed the critical stage and was being braced by the winter weather. Pasquale said nothing about his own visit to the doctor. He was made of iron. He did not care. He could not die. But that night, when the baby awakened him with its crying, he began to wonder if, after all, he would ever live to see his beloved Latisano again.

Having slept but little, Pasquale left his bed at three in the morning and stole down to the market, arriving before anyone but the watchman. This day he would make the money to go to Latisano if he died for it. He must. Tomorrow, yes, tomorrow, he and his family should sail for Italy. More sleepless nights of thought would put him in bed as well as Carmelite, and that would never do.

Tomorrow he and his family should start for Italy, and they would take the baby, alive. The slums should not snatch a thing but a wretched period of memory, on which they might feed to their ogreish content.

It was only a question of twenty dollars more. Pasquale had managed to get his balance back to sixty-five, and he would do without the nest egg for the new start in Latisano. There were friends there to give him a helping hand, Italians, real Italians, not these cold, selfish American-Italians.

Carmelite would get strong on the trip back. She would live and grow fat and strong again on hope. Then she could work in the hotel in Trieste, where the children would get enough to eat, while Pasquale would go to some farm near Latisano and prepare the way for his family. He would find work, warm, dry, agreeable work in the field.

As the auction end of the great market opened, Pasquale Pompilli crept among the boxes, poking his fingers through crate covers, trying his best to find some magical investment that would turn five dollars into twenty. During the last

few days his five-dollar capital had become by night only six or seven. Tonight it must be twenty.

At the end of one pile of cases he found two set apart, bearing malignant-looking red tags. He only half knew what those meant, but his heart beat madly at sight of them. He covertly poked his fingers through a hole in the cover of one and found the box full of firm, choice, expensive trout, a grade that sold for eight dollars or more a box, a quality he could never afford.

Lingering in fascination about the two cases, Pasquale waited until the sale began, paying no heed to the goods under the auctioneer's hammer. During a lull in the sale, Pasquale stepped forward boldly and tugged at the filthy apron of the fish salesman.

"How much you want?" he asked, indicating the red-tagged cases.

"You old skinflint!" cried the auctioneer, turning to recognize Pasquale. "Those are condemned—can't you see the label on 'em? They'll be dumped in the harbor inside of ten minutes." He turned to a blear-eyed wharf rat. "Jack, get them boxes out of the way before they get mixed up here."

Pasquale quivered in every muscle of his tense frame as he saw a wreck of a roustabout shuffle off for a truck and listlessly load onto it the two condemned boxes.

"I geev fiva doll'!" he cried hopelessly to the auctioneer.

"Get out of here, you guinea. They're nogood—condemned, I tell you. They're full of ptomaines!"

Fish were fish to Pasquale. He had only a vague understanding of the word "condemned." "Ptomaines" might be tomato sauce.

With shifty eyes he watched the wharf rat mechanically load the cases and start out along the dock.

Pasquale faltered; then, his feverish eyes blazing, he glanced at the auctioneer, found him occupied, and rushed after the man with the truck.

"I dumpa da feesh for you!" he cried in a hoarse whisper in the wharf rat's ear as he came upon him just outside the building. "Here!" He pressed three

one-dollar bills into the quivering hand of the surprised laborer.

"What in hell'll you do with 'em?" demanded the roustabout, his eager eyes nibbling at the money.

"I maka da glue," cried Pasquale, having heard the word in connection with fish.

"You won't sell 'em? They're chock full of p'isin, wop!" The dockhand wavered, glancing about to make sure that no one on the bustling wharf was watching.

"No, no; I no sell dem!" cried Pasquale cunningly, feverishly pressing the money into the man's hand and tearing off the red tags covertly.

"Leave-a dem here un minuta!" Pasquale urged, his face bursting with perspiration as he forced the roustabout's hand from the barrow. "Go buya da beer."

"Good idea, you old guinea. Dat's just what I was t'inking meself," agreed the wharf rat precipitately, his loose lips moistening with anticipation as he dropped the truck in a quiet corner and sneaked across the street to a popular resort.

Pasquale, his face glowing like a greedy schoolboy's, dashed to the side street where his pushcart stood, and in three minutes had shifted the untaged boxes to his own barrow.

Without stopping to unload them, he threaded rapidly through the crooked streets, away, away from the sickening market. He was only conscious of a dull pain in his lungs; they felt heavy; but tomorrow they would be well, tomorrow everything would be all right, nothing would matter.

To his own house he went, borrowing a larger pushcart from an indisposed neighbor, and deftly sorting his wonderful bargain fish in the cellar.

Josephina came down to help him with the work.

"Mamma is better this morning," she said in Italian, as they always talked among themselves. "She thinks she will try to sit up tomorrow."

"Good. Tell her everything will be all right tomorrow—no, today. Tell her to get ready."

"Get ready for what?" asked Josephina with round eyes, anticipating something from her father's feverishly happy manner.

"She will know. Tell her to get ready." Pasquale paused for a moment in sorting the splendid fish and looked around him irritably. "Where is the boy, Pasquale?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know," exclaimed Josephina with almost maternal petulance. "Playing on the street, I suppose. I can never keep him at home."

"Find him, find him, Jose," cried Pasquale. "I will take him with me today to run his little legs off delivering fish and save me trouble."

Josephina left at once, and Pasquale, having finished dressing the load, ran upstairs to Carmelite, whispering wild happiness in her ears and telling her to be ready for anything. He said he had found a bargain at last, a real bargain that would surely sell and bring the needed money.

Carmelite hugged him close and moved as though she would jump out of bed.

"Be careful!" cried Pasquale. "You are not well yet. You are weak. Be careful. I can take you to the boat in a carriage, because we are going."

A coo came from the baby and Pasquale stooped to kiss the soft cheek.

"Baby is better," said Carmelite. "The cold weather and staying in bed with me, it seems to be good for him. He is all well."

"Yes, that is good," said Pasquale, and his chest broadened, as he forgot himself and his lungs.

Running downstairs, he found his son awaiting him anxiously, glad of the chance to play at man's work.

"Where is Josephina?" Pasquale asked the boy.

"She has gone to the grocery to get something for mamma to eat."

"Good. That is right. Mamma must eat and get strong," said Pasquale, fondly eyeing his cart. The trout were better than his wildest dreams. Outwardly they seemed firm and fresh. Appearance was all that mattered in

Pasquale's business. Fish were fish, and these were fine.

Pasquale started out excitedly, the boy at his side, trying to help push the heavy cart. Pasquale headed for a section of town where he was unknown, although the district was not over a mile from his home. As he went along early housewives stopped and bargained for fish whose quality was so unusual in the street.

Pasquale felt no ache in his lungs all that morning. His head was clear, his tongue lucid. He sold fish, with both hands, at prices he had never dared ask before. His barrow nearly empty, he left the boy to sell for a minute while he ran into a saloon and drank a whole pint of wine in a swallow, to cool his burning throat.

When he came back the boy proudly handed him nearly a dollar he had taken in. Pasquale took his place behind the cart and sold right and left, before him and behind him, sold fish at the unprecedented price of seventeen and even eighteen cents a pound. He became giddy and light-headed as the silver in his pockets changed to bills, a bulging roll of them. Before noon his day was abruptly cut short for want of fish.

Standing on the corner, Pasquale counted his money. He could spare that much time. The amount was twenty-eight dollars and sixty-two cents! An undreamed-of price for only a little over a hundred and fifty pounds of fat trout.

He gave Pasquale five dollars and pushed the cart to a corner with which the boy was familiar. Then he left him with directions to return the cart, race back home, give the money to his mother or Josephina and tell them to prepare to sail that afternoon. Giddy with the realization that he was going back to Latisano, away from the sordid slums to the clear skies of Italy, Pasquale took a street car, an unusual luxury, and rode to Sunseri's bank. There he stood in the line before the cashier's window and drew out his entire balance, with a little interest.

With almost a hundred dollars in his pocket, Pasquale ran down the street to

a shipping office, where he learned that the *Sargosse* sailed for Naples at four that afternoon. Naples was near enough. His head swam and his hand trembled as he counted out the money for two full steerage tickets and two half-fares for the children, the agent magnanimously charging nothing for their year-old babe.

As Pasquale burst into his own home Carmelite tottered toward him. She had left her bed and painfully dressed herself and the baby.

"The *bambino!* The *bambino!*" she cried incoherently, and fell fainting in his arms.

Pasquale started forward to lay her on the bed.

A cry tore through his throat. One hand supporting his wife on the edge of the bed, he groped before him, feeling the white forehead of the baby.

"*La morte!*" he screamed, jerking back his hand as though the cold flesh had burnt it.

"*La morte, la morte!*" he moaned, slipping to his knees with fervently clasped hands pressed against his wife's sunken breast.

In the room there was no sound but the rattle of Pasquale's breath. His limbs stiffened; he became slowly conscious that Carmelite's heart, beneath his clasped hands, was beating but faintly. He remained in mumbling prayer.

A clatter of shoes came into the silent room of death. Pasquale's boy, who had gone ahead with the message and the money, rushed in and threw his arms around Pasquale's rigid neck.

"Papa, papa!" he wailed. "The fish, the fish! Josephina picked out two fine ones this morning for lunch; while you were gone she took them away. She cooked them for lunch."

"God! God! God!" cried Pasquale. "Josephina, where is she?"

"She has gone for the doctor. I saw her on the stairs. The baby ate some and is dead. And mamma. Josephina would not eat any. She said it tasted bad."

Pasquale Pompilli knelt, staring with bared teeth at the forms on the bed,

dressed in their best in expectation of a speedy departure to Latisano.

A gruff, fussy little Italian-American doctor bustled into the room. Josephina followed him on tiptoe, her swollen face concealed behind her quivering hands.

"The fish. The fish," she whispered as Pasquale turned reproachful eyes upon her. "They eat it. It taste bad. I spit it out."

"Ptomaines!" exclaimed the doctor, after a cursory examination of the fixed face on the rickety pallet of straw.

"Carmelite! Carmelite! She is not dead?" moaned Pasquale.

"No." The physician slapped Carmelite's wrists with one hand as he fumbled with the catch on his worn black bag with the other.

A minute later Carmelite's eyes flickered open, and they propped her up in bed while the doctor administered an emetic.

The emetic was effective. Turning to Josephina, the doctor sent her for an ambulance. The ambulance came. Carmelite had slipped into unconsciousness again. She was carried out on a stretcher, a dusty pillow beneath her fair cheek.

Pasquale remained kneeling at the bedside, little Pasquale clasping his right hand. Later, Josephina stole softly into the room with the news that her mother had reached the hospital. She brought two lighted candles and placed them tenderly one on either side of the baby's head. Then she knelt beside Pasquale and held his other hand tight, joining her simple prayer with his.

The great liner *Sargosse* sailed out of the harbor at four that afternoon, its steerage decks crowded to capacity. And as the boat was leaving dock newsboys all over the city were shouting the latest sensational extra:

"All about strange poisoning case! Eighteen mysteriously sick and one dead on East Side from eatin' fish!"

Pasquale Pompilli, a crumpled shell of himself, still knelt in the dim, candle-lighted room, mourning his dead, crushing in a frantic clasp the hands of the boy and girl beside him, and muttering



endlessly between bared teeth, "Ptomaines! Ptomaines!" his broad, low brow crinkled in a despairing frown of frenzied uncomprehension.

## IX

CARMELITE did not die. She lived to suffer. By the time the baby had been buried, Pasquale carrying the tiny coffin in a cab beside him to the cemetery, Carmelite was out of danger.

She tried to listen bravely to Pasquale when he came and sat long beside her hospital cot, telling her the details of the funeral, a simple one, without a band, as she had wished, and as their means demanded.

The loss of the babe only put a new care in place of the old. Carmelite had two children still—there was hope and cause for praise in that. But the children had no chance. Carmelite took Pasquale's hand and talked in low, tense tones.

"You will see that the children go to school while I am here. Mr. Benedicto promised that there would be room for them this month. If we had not been going back to Italy," she choked, and lay quiet for a minute before continuing, "I would have sent them."

"I will see to that, Carmelite. Tomorrow they will be in school, and they shall have books and everything as soon as I can get part of my money back on the tickets."

"You will get that back then?"

"Yes, nearly all of it, the agent said."

"Then it will only be to work and save for a few months more, and we will go back?"

"Yes, yes, dear," said Pasquale, patting her hand.

They had said nothing about the fish. Pasquale only dimly realized the damage he had done. He could not read the sensational American papers, and he had no time to look at his Italian daily during the trouble, so he had no way of knowing of the epidemic of ptomaines that had followed in his wake. He felt, however, an uncomfortable sense of guilt. He knew he had done wrong, but it was too

late to undo the wrong. If he had erred through zeal, who had suffered more than he? His punishment had been sufficient. The lesson was learned.

He could not bear to go near the fish market again. He was half afraid of being found out, and half disgusted with the slimy, scaly business.

Yet all he knew was fish, and while Carmelite was in the hospital he must do something to meet the daily demand for money.

The children were in school. There was satisfaction in that. But they attended only half a day, and Pasquale was determined to keep his eye on the boy until Carmelite could come back.

He went to a clam and oyster market and loaded up his cart with big clams. Then he took his stand within a block of his own tenement and opened clams for passers-by from morning until far into the night, keeping his eye on his boy, who played in the street near him after school.

Standing there, he had much time for thought. His memory ran back to the day when they had moved into the three rooms on the dark, rear airshaft, at sixteen dollars a month, and looking forward to occupying a twenty-dollar one with windows on the street and the sun peeping in for a brief moment each day. That dream had burst like a fascinating soap bubble.

The dream, too, of returning to the sunny Italian slope where he had farmed, peacefully and successfully, but without content, would not come true, at least for many a month.

And yet as he thought of the old life in Italy and compared it to the present, he was not wholly dissatisfied. Surely it was a more gentlemanly business to stand on a street corner and open clams for passing customers than to grub on a hillside with a blunt hoe. Slitting little lemons and passing out an eighth with each ten skillfully opened clams was more pleasant work than opening oysters at Rini's or pushing a fish cart, and then pocketing ten pennies in return for the favor proved that he was his own boss; and there was something in that, even something better than working on the

farm of a rich landowner outside Latisano.

But every day new disadvantages came. Winter had arrived and he had been forced to buy heavy underwear to withstand the cold of the streets. The children had been coming daily to him for school books. He had to buy wine for Carmelite; that was good for her, and was not furnished at the charity hospital to which she had been sent. It was a pleasure to do that, but it was hard to fill up the hole it made in his pocket.

Rapidly the Pompilli family was approaching ruin. Pasquale had lost twenty dollars in getting the rebate on his steamship tickets, and he had no illusions about the great future in clams on Mulberry Street.

When he went home he still pictured the baby's form on the bed, and to drive away the thought, and to forget his loneliness without Carmelite, whom he could visit only half an hour each day, Pasquale, after seeing that the children were in bed, went nightly to a little café in the neighborhood, where he eased his soul by talking against America and her crushing methods. He growled against the bosses. He heard whisperings about bombs and Black Hand letters, and was tempted. But remembering the lesson of the fish, he decided not to tamper with things unfamiliar.

Yet he would like to get even with America. He had been lied to about this grand free country. He had been imposed upon. America might be a fine place for Americans, or for the rich who had nothing to do but go to the moving picture show and hang around the big cafés. But it was no place for a foreigner who dealt in sea food. Prices were too high, competition too keen; there were so many other people in the city who had been deluded by the promise of a free land, and who daily tried to dispel the delusion by practising sharp American methods.

Before Carmelite was out of the hospital the clam cart had become a revolting, unromantic master. Pasquale could not pay his expenses by it, and his surplus was dwindling. Oppressed by care, he fought off all thoughts, all dreams of

home, sun-kissed hillsides, clear, unsmoked skies and the simple country life. Those would never be for him again.

On one visit to Carmelite he was particularly moody.

"I will be so glad to get back, even to the rooms on Mulberry Street," said Carmelite. "It is home. But they say here that I must wait and rest, that I was very sick."

"Yes," said Pasquale with a sigh. "It is a good place to live, since one must live. It is high and dry. We will be lucky to stay there and not move down to a cellar like Pietro's. The rent is very high."

"Pietro is doing no better?" asked Carmelite anxiously.

"Nobody is doing better but Giovanni, who is in politics."

"You could perhaps borrow money from him." Carmelite brightened. "I shall be strong when I get out, and able to work in the hotel at Trieste."

"I do not know," said Pasquale, returning to the fearfully bright thought of a possible return to Italy.

"You could do some political work possibly?" suggested Carmelite in a whisper.

"No," said Pasquale, shaking his shaggy head vigorously, for he was afraid of secret societies—their intrigues—their jealousies.

"And Nick perhaps would lend you money?" Carmelite clung to her hope.

"No. Nick, the fool, is still scraping with a hoe in Jersey. I will write to him. But it will do no good. He is probably worse off than all of us."

"Michele?" asked Carmelite, speaking of a friend they had known slightly who had gone to Canada with Pasquale.

"Michele," said Pasquale dismally—"Michele has caught on in Mulberry Street. He sends to Italy for groceries and good things, wraps them in tinfoil and tissue and sells them on *fête* days at big profit. But then," he sighed, "his wife and children make paper flowers. They help him. I heard only yesterday that he had a thousand dollars in the Bowery Savings Bank."

"When I am well and strong I can

make paper flowers," said Carmelite, moving restlessly in her bed.

"No, no!" cried Pasquale. "I will borrow the money to get back. Somebody must give it to me. We will go back where salad is had for the planting, where chickens cost only the grain they glean from the fields, where we can dance and sing and live in a house." He coughed and bent low over Carmelite to kiss her good-bye, as the ward nurse came to say that his time was up.

"And radishes from the ground, not the pushcart," murmured Carmelite, looking up at Pasquale with misty eyes. "A year's artichokes for two days' work with a spade. No shoes to buy, except for Sunday. We will go back, Pasquale, yes?"

"Yes," he said, brushing his hand over strained, red eyes.

Pasquale went to Michele that night and asked for a loan.

"My good friend Pasquale," said Michele in flowing Italian, "I would love to lend it to you. Yes, I have a hundred dollars and much more. But the principle of my business, the cornerstone of my success, has been to make my money work for me. It is easier on the hands to use the head."

That was too much like Rini's argument. Pasquale growled.

Michele patted him on the back complacently and laughed: "I have no more current funds to loan, but I can put you in the way of making a hundred dollars."

He spoke lightly in a beautiful, modulated bass, and Pasquale followed the smooth words suspiciously, growling his replies, feeling certain that he was being laughed at.

Michele grandly offered him the agency for his import goods in the Bleecker Street section. But that was too American an idea for Pasquale. He only shrugged his shoulders and grinned foolishly. "I cannot sell candies and wine. I cannot even sell clams; I have dug beetroot and grown *dei cavoli* and *carciofo* all my life. I must go back to Italy where the sun shines and life is without a headache."

"Pasquale, you are a fool," said

Michele, in a harsh voice now, softened only by a friendly accent. "Go out to Coytesville or Newark and raise your cabbages and cauliflower where you can take them to New York, the biggest market in the world, where you can get the best prices in the world. Nick has done that and many others."

"Is Nick making money, then?" asked Pasquale in surprise.

"I have not heard. But he has gone to the country, and the American soil is rich; it pays gold to the man who can cultivate it."

"Then why don't you go?" asked Pasquale sharply.

"I?" laughed Michele. "Why, I am a city man. I like this life here on Mulberry Street. I am a city man, a merchant; you are a country man, a farmer. That is the difference. America is big: it is not only New York. America is one thousand times bigger than Italy. It is one million times as rich and beautiful. There is room here and money here for all. Why stick in the slums? Go plant onions and spinach on Staten Island, or in Jersey. It is all fine, productive country. Beautiful hills. Beautiful—"

"Bah!" Pompilli cut him off with an angry hiss and an impatient gesture. "I hate America! It is cold, hard, dead, like the babies that die here. It squeezes the life out of you, like the juice out of a lemon." He turned sharply away and rushed off home.

But he did write to Nick that night, and sent the letter through the prosperous land salesman who had urged Pasquale to go to the country on his first day in New York.

A week later Carmelite came home, thoroughly well. She took up the household duties cheerfully, and though business was bad with Pasquale, he brightened at the change and picked up hope.

## X

THE winter was a hard one, but the Pompillis survived it. In February Pasquale's small savings had been swallowed up, and they had moved to one

room in a neighbor's flat. The clam business was discouraging, but there was nothing else to do. In spite of the doctor's diagnosis, Pasquale did not break in health. Possibly the biting air of the streets stung his constitution into asserting itself, but surely standing in the slush and breathing in released street germs, on the melting days in March and April, were not good for Pasquale's lungs.

He held his own and fought hard for a life and a living. Nick had not answered his letter, and Pasquale's hold on hope had gradually relaxed. But the children were getting a half-day's schooling and Carmelite had many little surprises for him in the way of food and comfort that made life still possible. If he was doomed to city slums he would make the best of it and keep his mind fresh by living in his dreams of rural Italy.

Then one day in May, when Pasquale returned from his clam cart, he found Pietro, who had abandoned his ice business and returned to blacking shoes at six dollars a week in the stand of a prosperous countryman. Pietro had brought a can of beer and a letter. They sat together in the Pompilli's single room and talked. Pietro thrust the open letter into Pasquale's hand.

"It is from Nick!" he cried.

"Ah, Nick!" answered Pasquale hopefully, scanning the letter. "He has never sent me an answer."

"He never received your letter," said Pietro, pointing a finger, shiny with the blacking he used, at a sentence in the sheet between them.

"You see, he asks why he has not heard from any of us. He says that he does not know if we are alive or dead, and that he wants us to come to his farm in Jersey and see him."

"His farm!" laughed Pasquale.

"Yes. He says he has done well."

"The fool!" cried Pasquale. "He is just proud. How could he do well trying to grow things to eat on the rocks they have in this country? He has probably asked us to come, thinking he can borrow enough money to get back to Latisano."

"No, no," cried Pietro. "See, he says he has planted early lettuce, radishes and dandelion greens, some under glass, and he has already sold eight hundred dollars' worth, and it is little more than April. Eight hundred dollars' worth!"

"Eight hundred dollars' worth!" repeated Pasquale. Then he cried irritably: "The fool! He lies!"

"He says for us to come out and see for ourselves what a wonderful country it is."

"Bah!" answered Pasquale passionately, drowning his doubt in the can of beer.

But he thought it over silently during the chatter that night. If Nick really had eight hundred dollars, no matter how he got it, he might borrow from him. Nick had always been a good friend. Had he not waited over in Halifax, and tried to help, too, in New York? Surely he would not refuse a loan to his despairing old friend Pasquale.

So Pasquale Pompilli wrote that he was coming and that Nick must meet him, because he would not know the streets in that Jersey place. The answer came that Nick would be on hand to meet the street car Pasquale must take on the Jersey side, at noon, Sunday.

With the hope of a loan as his guiding star, Pompilli set forth on Sunday, eyes down to avoid the disgusting, dingy artificiality and poverty of the streets through which he passed; his thoughts on Italy and her clear, blue waters, as he crossed the clay-puddled Hudson. He would not look out of the window even when the street car climbed the Palisades and struck off into the country. New York was the only place in America worth mentioning, and knowing how bad that city was, he could easily imagine Jersey.

Staring stolidly at the wicker back of the seat ahead of him, Pasquale saw only the squat figures "100" with a fat dollar sign before them. If Nick would lend him that amount, or ninety even, then—

"Oh, look at that beautiful hillside, simply carpeted with flowers! Quick!" exclaimed a girl in the seat ahead of him, turning to glance back.



"It reminds me of Italy," replied her companion.

"That glimpse of water, too; those trees; those fertile farms—I never saw anything so picturesque through Lugano or Como."

"The farms are certainly superior to some of those little pocket handkerchief patches in Europe," agreed her companion.

Pasquale smiled cynically and glanced challengingly through the window. A vast expanse of green cooled his eye. He caught a flitting glimpse of a truck farm—rows and rows of early vegetables, popping partly through the black, rich soil. His obstinate head turned irresistibly. The car shot through other fields. He could see the greens, luxuriant, full, bursting from the ground in thick, well ordered rows.

The sight was new to him. He felt a throb somewhere between his heart and his throat.

"Like Latisano," he admitted weakly to himself, knowing he lied.

His open-eyed stare betrayed him. He drank in the beauty, the freshness of the country; wondered at the fine horses prancing in the fields, marveled at the big barns and thrifty-looking houses.

The conductor called his station twice before he finally heard and clumped down the aisle in a panic, fearing he would miss Nick.

"Pasquale!" a red-cheeked countryman hailed him from a neat, roomy buggy, drawn by a striking team of deep-chested horses.

"Ah, Nick!" cried Pasquale, rushing into his arms, kissing his cheeks and patting his back in the demonstrative Italian fashion. "Such a fine team! Your own?" he exclaimed, his eyes running eagerly over the sleek animals as he took his seat beside Nick and fingered the fine laprobe.

"Nothing like that in Latisano, eh?" cried Nick proudly, touching the flanks of his team with his whip. "I finished paying for them this winter with the parsnips I dug. Yes, they are mine."

As they drove along the country road Nick pointed out the fields of neighboring farmers; told how one had paid for

his place with the crops of two years; how another made enough out of mustard greens alone to put up a new barn; how Solari, from their own countryside at home, had had much success with his hothouse cucumbers and was putting eight acres into corn.

Pasquale gasped at the results. They did not seem real. Yet here was the country, rolling away on all sides, not chopped up into chicken yard vegetable patches.

He was so absorbed in gathering the glowing details that he forgot entirely about the loan that had brought him out to hateful Jersey.

With a flourish Nick swung through his own gate and came to a stop beside a summer kitchen built during spare hours. "How you like eet?" he cried in English, sweeping his hand from the house to the barns connected by a luxuriant grape trellis and off into the fields of garden truck.

Pasquale exploded several adjectives ending in "*issimo*," and Nick beamed.

"After dinner I will show you how the American plow and cultivator work," he said.

Pasquale bolted down a hearty farm meal, the best he had had since leaving Italy—the best he had ever had, he would have said, if his enthusiasm hadn't been tempered by a tinge of jealousy at Nick's sudden wealth.

But he forgot even envy in the childish delight he found, after dinner, in breaking ground with such a marvelous plow. He took off his shoes and followed in the fresh furrow, exclaiming, investigating, experimenting. The cultivator was a revelation, the weeder a triumph.

"It is a pleasure to farm with such tools!" he cried, just before suppertime. "It is like being a gentleman to sit in a chair and drive a pair of fine horses. It is not work to farm in America, as it is in our country."

He had hardly stopped for supper. Rushing out into the open again, he called Nick to see the sunset. Over a beautiful, bountiful hillside on Nick's own property, he pointed out the great disk descending through clear, unsmoked

skies. Bowing his head, he repeated the evening prayer of the peasant for the first time since he had come to America; his breast broadened—he was a man again. He had happiness instead of consumption.

"I am not going home tonight," he said simply.

Nick beamed with pleasure.

"I am going to stay and help you put the radishes and lettuce in bunches, and I will drive with you to market on the wagon in the morning."

Nick clasped his friend in his arms like a boy, pounding with rustic enthusiasm on his back.

They worked deftly by lantern light, with the help of three men, the Sicilian housekeeper and her older children, until one o'clock in the morning—sorting vegetables, bunching them and loading them into a great wagon with built-up sides.

"You are sleepy," said Papa Pompilli, as they started in the middle of the night to drive marketward. "You curl up on top and I will drive."

"You are sure you remember how?" laughed Nick.

"Remember how? Watch me!" Pasquale cried, shouting at the horses and flicking their flanks caressingly with his whip.

At four o'clock they reached the ferry, and in half an hour the clamor of West Washington Market, Manhattan, burst upon them. They were soon engulfed in the roar and hustle of trade.

Pasquale chattered with buyers, counted out dozens of bunches, took money for Nick; playing desperately, feverishly, that he was a real farmer again. It was different from selling clams. Very different.

The amount of money taken in amazed him. "I have seen such radishes, once, at a fair in Milano, but never such *prices*," he said to Nick as they sold the last of the load.

"Farming in Italy is a dog and pony show for children. Where is there a market like New York?" cried Nick, stuffing the bills into his pocket. "Maybe you come out and help me this summer? Men that know how are hard to

get—good men, who know farming like you, Pasquale. I will give you an interest in my farm; it is much too big for me, and Carmelite can run the house—I cannot depend on the help I hire. Together we will make more money and can pay for the farm quicker. That means bigger profits. What do you say?"

Pasquale said nothing. His eyes lighted up like the rising sun, just peeping above the brick-topped city line. He threw his arms about his friend and pounded him joyously on the back.

"When will you come out?" asked good, simple Nick, bubbling over with the hope of a reliable yokemate.

"Now!" shouted Papa Pompilli, snatching the reins from Nick's hands and threading his way through the babbling market, dexterously dodging loads of purple cabbages, wagons bursting with glowing onions, heaps of spinach on the corners, barrels of cucumbers, and coming out at length on Fourth Street.

In thirty minutes' time he had reached Mulberry Street and swung his horses handsomely in at the curb before his one-room dwelling.

Racing upstairs, he cried, "Carmelite! Carmelite!"

The anxious face of Carmelite appeared at the door. Josephina shyly peeped from behind her skirts, and Pasquale, Jr., looked with round wondering eyes at his father's wide, toothy smile.

"We go back today!" cried Papa Pompilli, gathering them all into his arms deliriously, happier than on the day they had landed from Ellis Island.

"Back—to Italy?" cried Carmelite, a look of beatitude trembling in her beautiful face.

"Yes, yes. Today. Italy. Come. The boat is waiting. We will take the chairs, the beds, everything." Pasquale gave his son a kindly cuff and sent him hustling downstairs with a bundle of clothes he had snatched from a corner.

"But on the boat. We cannot take them. What do you mean? Where are we going?" cried Carmelite tremulously.

"To the New Italy. To Nick's place

in Jersey. The grand new country that we heard about back in Latisano. It is really there." His eyes glowed magnetically. "Come!" he cried.

"It is really there?" cried Carmelite, clinging to him, dazed by his happiness, which was hers.

"Yes, yes. Today we are happy, and tomorrow, and tomorrow," cried Pasquale, pushing Carmelite back with a kiss and clasping the children's cot in his arms. He rushed down to Nick's wagon, turning back on the landing to see Carmelite tumbling after him, struggling with a load of kitchen ware she had hastily gathered up, while Josephina

jumped down the steps two at a time, swinging a dishpan.

In ten minutes the room was cleared and Carmelite was packed in snugly between Nick and Pasquale on the driving seat, while the children were sitting up prim and stiff on the edge of the pink Cupid bed in the wagon box.

"Off to the land of the free!" cried Pasquale, waving his hat to the wondering neighbors crowding to the street. "Away from clams and sickness!" he cried, wildly exuberant. "Away from New York, the trap of America! Only fools stick in the slums. Drive on, Nick, to New Italy, just across the ferry."



## SPRING IN LESBOS

By John Myers O'Hara

O PHILOMEL, messenger of the spring,  
What olden stress of grief is thine to sing?  
The light wind lifts the apple boughs in bloom  
And the white petals drift across a tomb;  
And Sappho's name seems hidden where they heap  
A snow of fragrance on eternal sleep.

The dim sea turns to amethyst above  
No weary galley from a land of love;  
But the long olive slopes are still the same  
As when the girls from Cos and Sardis came;  
A nubile throng that quivered to the note,  
O Philomel, from thy ecstatic throat.

O Philomel, messenger of the spring,  
What olden pang of heart is thine to sing?  
The little theater of long ago,  
With named and carven seats, was just below;  
The temple where her lovers listened long  
To the wild passion of her pristine song.

The marble fragments gleaming at my feet  
Restore themselves in dream as Sappho's seat;  
The last rays wreath it with a rosy fire  
And take the shape symmetric of her lyre;  
And thy despair where wind and bough rejoice,  
O Philomel, is her enraptured voice.

# PAN IN THE CITY

By Victor Starbuck

GOAT-FOOT and Shaggy-leg, you who led the dance with me  
Up the hills, down the dells, through the summer glades,  
In the morning of the world, back in sunny Arcady,  
With the sturdy shepherd lads and barefoot maids;

You who made your pipes to skirl  
While we set the leaves awhirl,  
Naked nymph and dryad girl,

Across the beechen shades;  
Rosy foot and nimble knee, footing it so merrily,  
Rusty horn and tufted ear and shining silken braids.

Split hoof and oaten pipe, would you might return again,  
Scattering mirth and music down the dingy city street,  
Where the dust goes drifting by tawdry shop and window pane,  
And the crowds are shifting with their heavy hearts and feet—  
Ladies, scented and serene,  
Merchant, beggar, Magdalene—  
All the street a dancing green

With dancers gay and fleet;  
Feet that fall like April rain, music maddening heart and brain,  
Mingling with the laughter that the jolly stars repeat!

Goat-beard and Satyr-face, who would know our city then,  
With your syrinx tinkling through the streets like bells of gold?  
All the walls with fluttering leaves, like rocks along a mountain glen,  
Leaping with the laughing life their grayness could not hold;  
Blossoms springing everywhere,  
Moss upon the foot-worn stair,  
Swallows twittering high in air

And grass upon the mould—  
Who would know our city then, with all its mortal maids and men  
Adance like fauns in Arcady, in Arcady of old?



RANDALL—There's one thing I often wonder about the first Virginia families.

ROGERS—What's that?

RANDALL—I wonder whom they found to snub.



# LIARS AND LOVERS

By Edwin Baird

ON Donald Dillwyn's twenty-first birthday, which came on a Sunday in June, his father summoned him to the library and said:

"Lo, Don. S'down. Some'in' wanter saytoyou."

Donald sat down defiantly—withal nervously. Mr. Dillwyn adjusted his eyeglasses and ducked his head.

"World's been cabaret s'far, hey? Larks. Sparks. Songandth'rest. Hey—'mI right?"

Donald cleared his throat.

"I have never, sir," he sturdily confessed, "entertained any hope of being appointed superintendent of a young girls' seminary."

Old Dillwyn made a large gesture.

"S'allright. No kick. 'Wanter ask favor, 'sall. 'Gotaright, hey?"

"Why, I—why, sure!"

Mr. Dillwyn opened a sheet of paper which he took from his pocket. It cracked ominously. Donald eyed it with cold suspicion.

"Twenty-one's great age 'turn new leaf. Here's newun f'you: 'Morrow mornin', seven thirty, r'port to Sprague, salesmanager, gents' neckwear at store, g'work 'sclerk—"

"But, papa—" Donald's defiance had vanished, quite.

"Notsfast. Sprague putchu work. 'Gotinstructions."

"But, papa, I've—"

"Sonly r'quest, remember. Turnit-down ifyou wanter."

"Quite right. I forgot." Donald breathed easier. His defiance returned.

His father frowned.

"Nother thing. Don't wantcher-start bus'nesscareer 'smy son, und'stan'. Ever'body in place break damfool necks

givin'boosts. 'Don't wan' that. Want-chuclimb own strength, und'stan'?"

Old Dillwyn paused and puffed his fleshy cheeks. Also he looked grimly over his glasses at his son, and when he went on, though he lost no asperity, he spoke, for once in his life, with unclipped words.

"For that reason, Don, I wish you'd forget your last name when you begin work, and, remembering only your first and middle names, become Donald Williamson. Hey? What say?"

Donald was too dazed to say. But he was still defiant.

Mr. Dillwyn clippingly continued:

"Fineopp'tunities ind'partment-stores. Incomp'rable. Tremendous. Glorious."

Donald listened coldly.

"Fifty our men get fi' thousan' 'year. Twenty, ten thousan'. Sev'ral, twenty-fi' thousan'."

"What would my salary be, may I ask?"

Mr. Dillwyn referred to the crackling paper.

"Leven a week."

Donald's lip curled.

"Mother—what does she think of this?"

"Dunno. Didn't ask'er. Meant to. Hiked f'r Bar Harbor b'fore I gota-chance. 'Sall right, though. Thinkit over. Take all aft'noon. But lem-meknowt'night. R'member you're't th'crossroads, s'don't f'get m' guide-post."

Donald stood up. Defiance blazed in his mild brown eye. Defiance surcharged his slim young body. But when he walked from the library he had flung no gauntlet.

In the hall, however, he hurled his challenge—thus:

"I'm darned if I'll do it!"

Then he clapped on his hat—the soft, tawny one, turned up on one side and down on the other, with the cute little bow behind—and slammed the front door behind him. Outside, he sat irresolute on the stone balustrade of the veranda and swung his leg and thought.

He thought of his club—a dull, tiresome place on Sunday. He thought of his motor car—it was in the repair shop. He thought of his confidante (a married one, too)—she was in Europe. He refused to think of his father.

He sighed and lighted a cigarette. And his disconsolate gaze rested sourly upon the park.

Now Lincoln Park, being the haunt of foolish people who like fresh air, and the drawing room of plain people who dislike vanity, was to Donald an unexplored country. This notwithstanding he lived within a street's crossing of it.

But now came a whim—engendered, mayhap, by the park's June beauty—and presently he was sauntering over cool lawns beneath gently swaying boughs and viewing with a sullen eye a sylvan splendor.

Not far from the Lake Shore Drive entrance he passed a bench on which sat a violet-eyed girl reading a red-covered novel. She looked up, and their eyes met. Hers were serenely lowered, and he passed on. Within a hundred yards he turned and retraced his steps. Again her violet eyes were shyly raised to his, again demurely dropped, and again he walked on by. There was another bench. The third time he took it.

And lo, his sully mien was quite gone.

"Ahem! Pardon my speaking to you, but . . ."

Now she was a very pretty girl—perhaps some critics of feminine pulchritude would have argued she was just about to be a very pretty girl, for she was scarcely eighteen—and how she would have taken this brazen opening one can only conjecture, for just then a very singular thing occurred, and there

were so many happenings in such a small space of time that minor matters were quite forgot.

There was a wild uproar behind him, a precipitate commotion before him, and the next moment something must have struck him, for he had done a very neat biplane act, had alighted informally in the midst of a Polish picnic, demolishing a huckleberry pie and sounding a discordant note in the harmony of the festivities, and was sitting in an ungraceful position, looking surprised and resentful.

This is what had happened: a ninety horsepower touring car, piloted by a thirteen-year-old boy, slipped off its dignity in the afternoon procession, left the driveway, ran amuck, bumped the bench on which sat Donald, kiting that unfortunate young man as aforementioned, plunged on across the lawn, and ceased activities only when it smashed slap-bang against a stone wall.

Although no worse walloped than the average aviator, his knees trembled when he stood up. His fingers quivered, too, as he discovered when he tried to remove some banana mush and tomato jam adhering stickily to his clothing.

Not three minutes had elapsed since his hurried arrival, yet already he was surrounded by a crowd five deep, composed principally of swarthy-skinned men in celluloid collars and sleek-haired women in brass earrings, each of whom chattered with much gusto in a seemingly different tongue.

Then, quite suddenly, he began elbowing his way through the crowd. On the outskirts stood the girl. Her face was pale. (So was his, if he had but known it.) A policeman puffed up. Likewise a dozen motorists. The crowd thickened.

Donald took her arm protectingly—and laughed. The laugh was off key.

"I-it's all right," he assured her, and patted her hand. "I-I'm not hurt. Not even scratched. C-come on, let's go."

Comforting her with the assurance that everything was all right and that she needn't be afraid, he hastened off with her. She went doubtfully. But

her cheeks were exquisite rose petals again.

Certain of the more curious followed, proffering kindly inquiries anent whether or not they had been struck by an automobile, and why; but soon they abandoned the chase and returned to the hashed machine and its scrambled occupants as a more satisfactory feast for the eye.

They had walked a short way when Donald became aware that his companion smiled. Smiled she at a secret joke? Evidently yes. What was the joke? He was the joke. Or so he believed.

"You do look so fun-ny," she gurgled, "with that oleo smeared all over your cheek. No, wait! I'll wipe it off. Hold still now."

He had reached for his handkerchief, but already she was applying hers.

He thanked her copiously; and the copiousness drained his conversational fount. To save his soul, or the situation, he couldn't think of another thing to say.

They sat down on a bench on a verdant hillock near the band concert.

"Go in much for books?" he asked after a pause, and took the volume from her lap. He handled the book clumsily; it slipped from his fingers and fell to the ground. Which diminished not his embarrassment. As he stooped and picked it up the red covers fell open, and several letters and a sheet of galley proof fell out. He retrieved the papers, returned them, slapped the book shut, handed it back. And his face was the color of a nice ripe beet.

"Yes," she answered, and she seemed to grow somehow wistful. "I'm awfully fond of literature." A moment of silence. Then, hesitatingly: "Maybe it's because I make it."

"Oh, really?"

"Yes," she replied. "Verses, stories, novelettes, things like that, for the magazines."

"How interesting!" he exclaimed, and inched nearer.

She shook her head sadly.

"Not when you know the game like I do. Although I live in an attic and

cook in a chafing dish and do lots of other things supposed to be romantic, it's an awful grind. And the rejections! How they rain! They almost drown me; and sometimes my umbrella is all full of holes. And sometimes"—her wistfulness waxed pronounced—"sometimes there's nothing to cook in the chafing dish."

He eyed thoughtfully her cheap, simple though wonderfully becoming apparel, and gravely wagged his head.

But all at once:

"Well, say! Talk about luck! Listen: here I am, a magazine editor in search of writers; there you are, a magazine writer in search of editors. Both come to Lincoln Park, both sit side by side, both strangers. Now then. Bubble buggy bumps bench. Presto—editor meets writer, writer meets editor, strangers made friends. Now what d'you think of that? Isn't it the luckiest?"

She stared at him with round, wondering eyes. Probably from astonishment. He looked young for an editor.

"You—an editor!"—very slowly, as though not quite able to grasp the absurdity.

"Yup. Me—an editor. Don't look it, do I? Well, no more do you look like a writer. At least not as I've always pictured 'em."

Her beautiful eyes widened.

"Why," she said wonderingly, "I should think you, as an editor, would meet many writers."

He was equal to it.

"No, indeed. All my manuscripts come by mail, and I never see the authors. You're the first one I ever clapped eyes on. And you must let me have something right away. I'll pay for it just as though you were Lillian Russell or Laura Jean Libbey, or any of those great scribes. That's the way I do business."

For some reason she failed to share his enthusiasm. Contrariwise, she turned to appraise a late if loud word of Halsted Street fashion, which at that moment passed, and began fingering her book fitfully. Had her face been toward him he might have seen her blush.

Still, when she stood up and smoothed out her duck skirt he noted afresh how disconcertingly pretty she was. Quite the prettiest girl, he unhesitatingly decided, that had ever delighted his vision.

"Don't you think it's awfully warm here?" she asked, and recommended a walk toward the lagoon as being cooler. "And please," she begged, as they started down the slope, "don't let's talk shop on Sunday. My strictest rule forbids it."

As they sauntered along the shady walk, which is the Peacock Alley of North Side shop girls, though known to some folks as Lovers' Lane, he felt a throb of pride as, reviewing the afternoon promenade, he observed that no girl of it could compare with the lovely creature who strolled beside him. His self-esteem was tickled. Haply it never occurred to him that had he not scowled at the park when he lighted his cigarette some other youth might now be in his place.

In the refreshment pavilion at the north end of the lagoon they had ice cream soda and crackerjack; and when they came out to the boat landing, where green-suspended gentlemen handed rainbow-hatted ladies into saffron-painted skiffs, he bought peanuts and chewing gum.

"We shall now have," he announced, "a boat ride."

He opened negotiations with the man of the boathook; and forthwith they were gliding over the crowded lagoon, he plying the oars and looking very red and warm, she sitting at the tiller and looking very fresh and cool—like a dewy rosebud. Now propelling a heavy row-boat in the glare of a June sun is neither invigorating, refreshing nor conducive to mental joy, yet whenever he looked at her and she smiled into his eyes from beneath the broad brim of her poppy hat . . .

Well, the boating came to an end, and, fatigued and happy, hat in hand, coat over arm, he paid fifty cents for two of the blithest hours of his life, and they went in search of further adventure. They visited the zoo, and he bought more delicacies and they fed them to the

bears, until one of Cy de Vry's men saw them. Then squirrels got the remainder, and presently—after an aimless peregrination—they were sitting on a rustic settee in a sunken flower garden near a great bronze fountain that splashed and gurgled rhythmically. And he was saying:

"It's really incredible. Here we've been together all afternoon, just as though we'd known each other since babyhood, when, as a matter of fact, we don't even know each other's first names."

Again he admired her milky white teeth.

"How awfully shocking! Mine's Gertrude. Isn't yours Thaddeus? Tell me that it is."

"I won't. It isn't. It's Donald."

She pursed her lips doubtfully.

"U-um; can't say I like it much—at least, not as well as Thaddeus, which I've been calling you to myself, anyway. Couldn't you change it?"

"I might," he assented, and added boldly: "I might do anything for you." He colored and said hastily: "Yours is the finest of all. Gertrude"—he lingered over it caressingly—"it's a pretty name."

"You jollier! Is that what you tell all the girls? No wonder you're such a fascinator."

There was considerably more of this—some of it worse. But never mind.

Later—long after the sun had shed his eventide rays aslant the gorgeous flower beds—they were seated *à l'italienne* at a table on the outdoor dining balcony of the park refectory, and, with the lagoon shimmering below in an amazingly fine imitation of a Venetian water scene, with the lights twinkling softly through the foliage and trees, with the lake breeze fanning gently the exquisite summer night, certainly nothing lacked.

Due season found them on a shadowy, secluded knoll that commanded a superb view of the dimpling lake. Here, after a brief preamble, that weightless converse, which the exigencies of time had interrupted at the fountain, was resumed. Gradually, by imperceptible degrees, it



grew more and more sympathetic, until presently, by a very natural sequence of events, she was resting contentedly against his coatless shoulder, and his bare arm was around her waist, and her warm little hand was lying confidently in his, and they were gazing dreamily off into the starry night. And somewhere out in the fragrant darkness a banjo twanged melodiously to the accompaniment of a mandolin, and the moon bobbed up over the lake and waxed full and glorious in the cloudless heavens. And she moved slightly in his thrilling embrace, and he looked down into her face, bathed in the flood of soft moonlight—and made a discovery. She was not merely pretty. No! She was beautiful—*beautiful*! His arm tightened upon her pliant body; he drew her closer.

"Gertrude?" he breathed.

"Y-yes?"

"I—I believe I'm going to fall in love."

"W—who with?"

"With you, s-sweetheart."

"Oh!"

"When I count three I'm going to kiss you."

"You mustn't."

"Why not?"

Silence.

"Well, here goes. One—watch out!—two—"

"You m-mustn't—"

"I must!" Very quickly he placed his hand against her cheek, turned her face upward and kissed her full on the lips.

She drew a deep breath; her eyes closed; her young bosom rose and fell deliciously beneath her fleecy waist. And then she encircled his neck with her arms and drew his head down and pressed her warm, fresh lips to his.

After a space:

"D-Donald?"

"Gertrude—d-dearest?"

"I think your name is ever so much sweeter than Thaddeus."

"You dear!"

After another space:

"Donald, it is really and truly serious with you?"

"Great heavens!" In a transport, he embraced her, palpitating, flushed and breathless, kissing her hair, her cheeks, her lips, even her soft white throat.

A third space:

"Because if it is, I've a confession to make."

"I guess it'll keep," said he, his cheek against hers.

"Donald, what I told you a while ago—it wasn't true."

"You told me lots of things a while ago," he murmured happily, stroking her hair.

"I mean about your—about m-my—"

He kissed the words against her lips.

But she drew away and rushed on pellmell:

"I lied to you; I'm not a writer; I don't live in an attic; I never wrote a story in my life. I live with my mother in a flat; I don't cook on a chafing dish; I never saw a rejection slip; we cook on a gas range, same as everybody—"

"Well, well, well!"

"I don't know why I did it. It wasn't a joke. I was dead serious. I didn't know I was going to f-fall in l-love with you. When you dropped that proof sheet—it belongs to a girl friend who's a proofreader—it all popped into my silly head. And it was all a lie—a horrid, wicked lie!"

"If you've stopped for breath," said he, "I've something I'd like to say. It's this: I'm no more an editor than I'm the King of the Zulus. I wouldn't know a prize novel from a turnip."

She snuggled back into his arms.

"I'm so glad. But I shouldn't have—"

"It doesn't matter."

"I'm only a poor—"

"It doesn't matter, sweetest girl. All that matters is that we are—man and woman. And I'm rich. Enormously rich. After we're married we'll go away off some place—Italy or the Mediterranean, or Paris—and be happy forever and ever, amen."

Whereupon she fell strangely silent. She didn't return his caresses, and presently she slipped from his embrace, donned the poppy hat and picked up

her book and reticule. All this with an ominous quietness.

She rose.

"I must go now," she said. "Do you care to see me to the car?"

He sprang dazedly to his feet, uttering protests. It was early yet—scarcely nine. Surely—

"No, I must go."

She started off. He joined her. They walked on in silence. Then:

"Donald, where do you work?"

"W-work? Nowhere. The old man keeps me in cash."

"I wish you wouldn't say that," she pleaded in a low voice.

"Why?"

"Because we've fibbed enough for one day."

He stared, perplexed. "You mean you don't believe I'm rich?"

"Yes. No. I don't believe you're—rich."

"And you do believe I'm poor?"

"Yes."

"Would you—rather have me poor, Gertrude?"

"Of course," she said simply. "I wish you wouldn't pretend you're not. I detest rich people—fat, stuck-up snobs! Before I'd known you ten minutes I knew you were a clerk, or something—like myself—and that's the way I want you. You're too *nice* to be rich!"

"Thanks. Now suppose I speak the undressed truth?"

"Please do."

He squared his shoulders.

"My name is Donald Williamson, my age twenty-one, my occupation a department store clerk's. I am employed in the gentlemen's neckwear department at Dillwyn's, and I earn eleven dollars a week."

They had reached by now the entrance to the park and were standing in the fringe of the throngs.

Suddenly he felt her hand clutch his arm, heard her exclaim excitedly:

"My purse! It's gone. I had it a moment ago. Will you look for it, Donald?"

He would. He did. But the purse could not be found.

And neither—when he turned back—could Gertrude! She was gone—*gone!* No doubt of it.

Frantically he searched through the tired, perspiring crowd. His brow waxed clammy. His hands likewise. And then he saw something that froze his blood solid.

Twenty feet away a street car had stopped. People swarmed upon it like ants upon a sugar lump. And of that sweltering swarm she was one.

The conductor rang his bell, and the car went banging and rattling down the hot, dusty street.

And he was standing on the corner, absently fumbling for his cigarette case. Abstractedly he selected a cigarette, abstractedly lighted a match—and stood staring after the car. A brewery truck blotted it from view. Something hot bit his finger. He flung the match in the gutter, threw the cigarette after it, turned on his heel, strode toward home.

He laughed loudly. Curious stares followed. A group of girls giggled.

"Well, what d'you *think* of her, now? The darned little flirt! What d'you think of her!"

Barely had he placed foot on the steps of the veranda before he knew who and what awaited him. The orange glow of a cigar supplied the augury.

"Lo, Don. Finenight."

"It's too hot."

Puff-puff.

"Bout'r bus'nessprop'sition—made-up'r mind?"

"I have."

"Fine. Great. Congratchulatechu." Puff-puff. "Gowork 'morrow, hey?"

"No, sir. I go West tomorrow."

A distressing stillness. Not even a puff-puff to disturb it.

"Whatchamean?" demanded old Dillwyn harshly. "Whatchatalkin'bout?"

"I'm leaving tomorrow for Billy Hibbard's fruit ranch in California."

"Hellyousay. Whatchawantadothere?"

"Loaf. Fish. Golf. Motor—"

There was a sudden and terrific explosion. It sounded like the epitome of an insane Fourth.

"Then find the money for it! Not another damned d'you get fr'm me understand! Not another—"

"Oh, you can't frighten me that way. Billy'll give me work if I want it. And he'll pay more than eleven dollars a week, too. Good night, sir. See you at breakfast."

Harshly slammed the door. Old Dillwyn was alone.

Donald slept well next morning. Possibly this was because he had slept ill the night before. He breakfasted alone—his father having gone—then returned to his room and disinterred a suitcase.

He called a taxi and went chuffing toward the Loop. At a busy State Street corner he was stalled momentarily. Leaning out the window, he found himself opposite Dillwyn's department store. His eyes roamed idly to a fourth floor window. Behind that window his father was hard at work. Donald gazed pensively.

While the crossing policeman untangled the mesh of traffic, he sat thus

gazing. And perhaps it was a twinge of remorse, or perhaps—

The blockade lifted. His taxicab whirled.

"Hey, shofe! Wait!"

Three minutes later he stood within the beehive, busily buzzing with the Monday morning swarms.

He would go up only for a word of farewell. It wouldn't do to leave the old man without even a parting word.

He put his suitcase down, waited for an elevator. One came. A herd pressed off—another on.

But he knew it not. Absently, he moved to one side of the crush, nor averted his eyes a jot from what enthralled them. He still stood staring with all his might across the aisle at the gentlemen's neckwear counter.

For there, her clear violet eyes serenely holding his, was Gertrude.

And then he moved toward her; and as he drew near a soft, lovely blush surged rapturously over her face and mounted rosily to her wavy brown hair. And he realized anew that she was not merely pretty—but *beautiful*.



## JONQUILS

By Louis Untermeyer

A HANDFUL of slender jonquils,  
With candid and innocent eyes—  
And lo, from the mists of my boyhood,  
I felt it arise . . .

A song and the poignance of April,  
And evening a languid haze—  
Long talks and a longer silence—  
Oh, love, those days!



WHY do we speak of the wealthy alone as being "well off"? Why not include the single?

# LOVE'S SILENCES

By Charles Hanson Towne

**T**HERE are great silences in a great love,  
And fools are they who vainly strive to reach  
Those shining shores beyond the verge of speech,  
Where none should fare—not even the white dove  
That hides forever in true lovers' souls,  
And blesses them with stillness. There are deeps  
That none should desecrate; jealous, Love keeps  
Sure watch when passion's ocean round her rolls.

These calms are Love's hid meaning; they contain  
The covenant and gospel of Love's years,  
The very Bread of beauty and the Wine.  
Oh, never dream to enter that dim fane,  
Flooded with knowledge and Love's awful tears,  
But bow before the hush that is divine.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

**T**HE knees of a quitter knock together.  
Where there's a bill, there's a pay.  
Where folly is bliss, to seem ignorant is wise.  
To a gossip: If at first you don't succeed, pry, pry again.  
The art that lies in woman's cries. . . .



**B**ROWNE—What ever became of Digg? You remember, he took a Ph.D. in  
Greek poetry.

**GREY**—He's scanning meters for a gas company.



**T**O have a woman always agree with you before you have married her is a  
bore—afterward it's a miracle.



## TWENTY DAYS

By George Catton

THE man rolled over upon his left side and raised his head in a listening attitude. Outside the shack it was forty below zero, and it seemed but little warmer inside. For fully five minutes he remained in that position; then he sat up and looked at his watch. It wanted ten minutes of four—three hours to daylight.

Down the river a timber wolf raised his voice in protest at the awful cold and the lack of food, while just outside the door another made answer. The man got up and pulled on his boots. He could not sleep, there was a dull ache at the back of his head, and his eyes pained a little. Carefully drawing the coals together, and piling on some wood, he hung the kettle on the hook and sat down before the fire.

Down the river somewhere was Abe, his pal, trying to reach Fisher's Point, that lawless outpost of semi-civilization, fighting a trail through two hundred miles of powdery snow and daring starving wolves and the stark white death of forty below. Why? Their clean-up, a small fortune in dust and nuggets, lay hidden beneath that flat rock on which the fire burned. They had provisions enough to last them till long after the spring floods had left the river, and the shack was secure and weather-proof. But Abe was down the river somewhere, daring the silent death of rigid frost and that thing that famished wolves leave behind them on the trail.

Their supply of tobacco had run out! Ugh! The wind howled around the shack, and the green logs snapped and cracked as the frost bit into them. Would Abe reach it, or would he turn back?

A wolf, bolder or hungrier than the

rest, sniffed at the bottom of the door, and the man glanced up at the rifle that hung above the window. Ugh! It was cold, even there in front of the fire. Well, they had drawn lots; Abe was unlucky, that was all. It was luck. If he had drawn the short stick, he should have gone instead of Abe. God, how his head ached!

He hadn't had a smoke for three days, or was it four? Abe had been gone three days, and they had used the last pipeful the day before he left. That was four days. It seemed as many months.

The kettle had started to boil. He made a pan of tea and drank it.

He always felt better for a hot drink of tea—for a little while.

Abe was down the river somewhere. It would take him ten days to get to Fisher's Point, ten days—with luck; and Abe was always unlucky. Ten days to go, and ten days to get back. Twenty days! Twenty days! Hell—he couldn't wait that long. His throat was dry and his head felt heavy at the back. Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days! Hell! He'd go, too; and he got upon his feet. Then his mind cleared a little. He threw more wood on the fire and lay down on his bunk.

Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days! It kept running through his brain. His tongue felt just as it did that time five years ago out in Arizona, when he had crawled on his hands and knees for two days through the sand without water; and his eyes—God, how they pained!

Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days! What fool was it that kept talking about twenty days? Twenty days—twenty days—twenty . . .

He awoke with a start and sat up. It was broad daylight and the fire was out.

He rebuilt it and put on the kettle, setting it upon the blazing faggots instead of hanging it on the hook as usual. Then he opened the door and started down the river.

The wind had died down and the weather had moderated. Snow was falling: that wet, heavy snow that clings and packs to snowshoes and makes one mile equal three.

Abe must be sixty miles away by this time. Sixty miles away; that's one hundred and forty from Fisher's and tobacco, while he was twenty days, twenty days—

He slammed the door, put up the bar and got some breakfast.

All day he carved at a block of wood, making shavings to start the fire with, just to keep his thoughts away from it. This way and that he hacked, figuring angles and studying the curls of the shavings. Supper time came. By sheer force of will, he ate the meal. After that he couldn't control himself to sit down. Backward and forward he walked across the little room, till his footsteps became always the same length and the regular paces grew into a mocking sing-song: "Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days . . ." God, how it worried him!

For the twentieth time, he searched his pockets, but failed to find anything that even smelled of tobacco. He opened the shutters of the window, and looked out. It was still snowing, and the air was warmer. As he closed and fastened the window, his hand touched Abe's old pipe upon the sill. It was cased a half-inch thick all around the inside of the bowl. Something in his whirling brain suggested that the stuff was tobacco. Carefully he cut it out, and piling it into his own pipe he placed a live coal upon it.

Twenty days—twenty days; it sizzled and burned and fried. Twenty days—twenty days; the rank blue smoke curled up around his head and made his senses reel. Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days! "Hell!" he screamed, and pitched forward to the floor. When he

came to his senses an hour later, he found that his nose had been bleeding. Somewhere in the back of his head, someone was singing a song about twenty something—he couldn't quite catch the words. He drew the coals together and sat down, and stupidly watched them die and get cold. Outside the snow was still falling and the wolves were getting bolder.

That wolf was at the door again. He had been there every night since Abe went away. Abe had gone to Fisher's for—now what in blazes did Abe want to go to Fisher's for, when the wolves were so thick? What was it Abe had gone away for? Damn that wolf! He was sniffing at the door again. Now he was scratching as though he wanted to get in. Funny thing! It was the wolf that was sniffing, "Twenty days—twenty days." What did he know about "twenty days"; and what was "twenty days" anyway? Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days. "Stop it!" he screamed, and threw a stick of wood against the door. "For the love of God, stop it!"

Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days. Hell—he'd stop it!

He rose and taking down the rifle, he placed the muzzle against the bottom of the door and pulled the trigger. As the last echo of the report died away, there was a rough grunt and a soft rustling on the snow outside; then all was still again.

Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days; it was in the back of his head now. It hadn't been the wolf, after all. What was "twenty days," and where was Abe? Oh, yes, Abe had gone to Fisher's Point for tobacco; that was it—tobacco! Where was his pipe?

He found it on the hearth where it had fallen, and picking it up, he gloated over the load which he could feel it contained. Then he put a match to it, then another, and another, cursing to himself and trying not to listen to the "Twenty days—twenty days—twenty days" that was running through his brain like a string of pictures on a screen. Then something got tangled up in the string, and he sank to the floor.

Outside, the wolves fought over the

carcass by the door, and then the snow came down and buried the few bones they left.

Five days passed before the man sat up again, but the weather had become milder and saved him from the stark white death.

It was dark, and his head ached frightfully. He was numb with the cold. "Abe!" he called. "Abe!" But no one answered him. Then it all came back in a flash. Abe had gone to Fisher's Point yesterday. No, it was three days ago. No, it was—he couldn't remember.

He lit a match and found he was on the floor. He lit another and found that his watch had stopped at twelve twenty—last night or a week ago? He made a fire and brewed a pan of tea and drank it. He always felt better for a hot drink of tea—for a little while. He tried to eat something, but his stomach would have none of it. Then he banked the fire, and covering himself up on the bunk, fell asleep.

Soon after daylight he awoke. He ate a little breakfast, and spent the morning trying to recall the days since Abe went away. Abe had gone to Fisher's Point for tobacco.

He looked round for his pipe, and finding it, put it in his mouth. What a queer taste it had! He held it up and smelt it. Ugh! What a smell! His stomach revolted. What the deuce was the matter with that pipe? He flung it to the far corner of the cabin. And then—then it burst upon him that there was nothing the matter with the pipe but that he had lost the taste for tobacco. He didn't want to smoke any more, but he wanted something. He wanted—yes, that was it: he wanted a big cold drink of fresh sweet milk.

The winter passed, and Abe didn't come back. Nor had the boys at Fisher's seen him.

The snow had run into the river and out again, and the wild flowers had begun to push their heads up through the masses of dead leaves, when the man, with his packs strapped securely into the canoes, fastened the door of the shack on the outside, and carelessly kicking aside the few remaining bones which he thought were those of the wolf he remembered he had shot in his delirium of the winter, faced homeward to civilization again.



## AFTER LOVE

By Sara Teasdale

THERE is no magic any more;  
We meet as other people do;  
You work no miracle for me  
Nor I for you.

You were the wind and I the sea—  
There is no splendor any more;  
I have grown listless as the pool  
Beside the shore.

But though the pool is safe from storm,  
And from the tide has found surcease,  
It grows more bitter than the sea  
For all its peace.

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# NARCISSUS

By Robert Bridges

ALMIGHTY wondrous everlasting  
Whether in a cradle of astral whirlfire  
Or globed in a piercing star thou slumb'rest  
The passionless body of God:  
Thou deep i' the core of earth—Almighty!—  
From numbing stress and gloom profound  
Madest escape in life desirous  
To embroider her thin-spun robe.

'Twas down in a wood—they tell—  
In a running water thou sawest thyself  
Or leaning over a pool. The sedges  
Were twinn'd at the mirror's brim  
The sky was there and the trees—Almighty!—  
A bird of a bird and white clouds floating  
And seeing thou knewest thine own image  
And lov'd it beyond all else.

Then wondering didst thou speak  
Of beauty and wisdom of art and worship  
Didst build the fanes of Zeus and Apollo  
The high cathedrals of Christ.  
All that we love is thine—Almighty!—  
Heart-felt music and lyric song  
Language the eager grasp of knowledge  
All that we think is thine.

But whence?—Beauteous everlasting!—  
Whence and whither? Hast thou mistaken?  
Or dost forget? Look again! Thou seest  
A shadow and not thyself.



WHEN a man is a crank it's hard to turn him.



SOME men will never make any "dust" until they are cremated.



# THE MAN WITH A COUNTRY

By Freeman Tilden

This is the season for spellbinders. Memorial Day celebrations all over America produce orators like the one described in this story—men who will do anything for their country but fight.

UP to the year 1905 William D. Simms had never suspected himself of any unusual oratorical power; nor had he speculated much on national politics or statesmanship. In that year, somewhat like a retarded flower, he bloomed. He was then thirty-eight years old, a broad-shouldered, ruddy, healthy man, who did no discredit to a Prince Albert coat. The editor of the *Leebury Intelligencer* afterward had occasion to speak of Mr. Simms as "Dantesque," which, though it did not identify Mr. Simms to any extent, identified the editor of the *Intelligencer* as a well informed man.

In this important year, 1905, William D. Simms was asked to make an address before Valiant Lodge 133, Royal Arcanum, of Leebury. The prospect frightened him a little. He had once recited "The Seminole's Defiance" at Leebury Academy; but thereafter had been absorbed in the management of a prosperous shingle mill. Under such circumstances most men ask their wives for advice, but Mr. Simms was not married. So he counseled with himself, and resolved to speak.

This address was a profound success. All hitherto unadvertised, Mr. Simms possessed a reverberating baritone voice, which comfortably filled Odd Fellows' Hall and overflowed into the street outside. The title of the address was "Our Flag."

The peroration was notable. It went something like this:

"From the rock-ribbed shores of Maine to the sun-kissed sands of Florida,

from the Golden Gate to tempestuous Hatteras, we are one undivided people—one people, one flag. Let us pledge ourselves, at this eventful moment, one and all—"

At this point, from the rear of the hall, a shrill, penetrating voice cried, "Rot!"

Mr. Simms, whose left hand at the moment was upon his breast, and whose right hand was uplifted, index finger foremost, in the general direction of the stars, paused. Then he repeated: "Let us pledge ourselves at this eventful moment—"

Again the acid voice broke in, this time with the monosyllable, "Bunk!"

A murmur of displeasure ran through the audience. Mr. Simms peered down in the direction of the interruption, but the kerosene lamps at the foot of the dais bothered him. He gathered himself together and bellowed: "Fellow citizens, I call upon you to put that man out!"

"I'll go out, and glad of it!" responded the disaffected one at the rear. But willing hands applied themselves to the man before he could act on his resolve; and though many stories were afterward told of the occurrence, the general impression was that Hobbs (the objector) was pushed to the top of the street stairs, and then pushed again.

Whereupon, silence being restored, William D. Simms finished his peroration; and the cheering and stamping lasted three minutes.

This remarkable address, and the dramatic incident that attended it, had many important results; but the total

effect was this: it fixed permanently, in Leebury, the status of William D. Simms and the status of Elisha Hobbs. From that moment of ejection, Hobbs was a marked man; a sort of traitor, whose only reason for not having committed overt treason was the lack of opportunity. Some would have excused him on the grounds of intoxication; but it was well known that he did not drink. Others shyly mentioned dyspepsia and its awful ravages on the disposition. This defense failed. Hobbs was written down an enemy of the nation.

William D. Simms was a marked man, too, but in a happier way. He was established as a patriot. All the citizens of Leebury (except Hobbs) were patriots, too; but Simms was articulate, ready, forceful. Simms stood for Liberty and Union. The others were for Liberty and Union, but did not stand.

This was in 1905; a year of consequence in Leebury.

Give a dog a blue ribbon, and he will surely try to live up to it, even though his ancestors erred. The same dog, with a can attached to his tail, will soon show a character warped toward sin. It is likewise with men.

Nobody ever asked Elisha Hobbs to explain his extraordinary conduct at the meeting of Royal Arcanum. Yes, one man did: the janitor of the Public Library. But he got little satisfaction.

"That was a regular rumpus you kicked up the other night," said the janitor.

"Was it?" replied 'Lish, with a queer look in his eye. That was all; not a bit satisfactory. 'Lish picked up a drawing knife, and the janitor retired from the wheelwright shop precipitately, though the peaceable intention of 'Lish was to shave down a spoke. But that was the way of it. The intentions of the man were constantly suspected. Never a barn burned after that but somebody winked his eye and softly coughed the name of Hobbs. If there had been another wheelwright within fifteen miles, Elisha Hobbs would have got small trade. But bygones are bygones in

business, especially when you face a monopoly.

As for William D. Simms, he had sown generously, and he now reaped the blessed harvest. He was in demand as a speaker; spoke to everybody, everywhere. He became arbiter of many disputes, but his specialty was patriotism. It was Simms who planned the Fourth of July celebration at Leebury Common, when all the school children for miles around were grouped in the form of a flag, clad properly to indicate the colors. Simms introduced a flag salute into the public schools. He gave away patriotic songbooks, and the fact that a picture of his shingle mill was printed on the back did not interfere with the central idea. When the flag on the Town Hall got frayed, Simms was asked for advice. Simms was elected First Selectman of the town the following March. People said, "There goes Mr. Simms!" and "Here comes Mr. Simms!" and those close friends who had called him Bill changed it to Will.

William D. Simms was now a man with a country.

They organized the Leebury League, and Simms was the first president. It was a secret society, with inside and outside guards, degree work and passwords; so its purpose and functions were soon common knowledge. The fundamental idea was Patriotism. The Leebury League stood ready to back up anything that the government at Washington might see fit to do. It affected peaceableness, but was ready for war when war should come. Within the league there was a sort of tacit agreement as to what one American could do, in the matter of fighting.

Each member of the Leebury League wore an appropriate button, and played a fair hand, at least, at whist or cribbage. It was admitted that the League owed its existence to the patriotism of one man—and that man was Simms.

In 1910, third year of the Leebury League and fifth year since the rise of William D. Simms, an event happened which, obscure and paltry enough at first, gradually led up to a serious condition in the national affairs.

A respectable American sailor, it was reported, had been thrown out of a drinking parlor at Iquique, Chile, reviled by the inhabitants, and left in the street to grow sober without any medical assistance. Other things had occurred in Chile, in the last few years, which made the attitude of that republic extremely offensive to the United States. To name only one affront, a large concession for mining operations had been given to the Belgians, in the face of a strong competition by American citizens.

The American minister made representations at Santiago, demanding an apology. No apology was forthcoming. More representations were made, without result. The minister threatened to withdraw his *exequatur*. The Chilean government permitted him to do so. In Valparaiso an American acrobat was jeered when he fell from his trapeze in a music hall, and the figure of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was burned in effigy at Antofagasta, under the mistaken impression that the late poet was a prominent contemporary statesman. The difficulty speedily became acute.

At this point in the negotiations the Leebury League passed a vote of confidence in the government, and sent it by telegraph, prepaid, to Washington. Soon afterward, the government at Washington began to take a more decided stand. It was reported daily that the marines were on the move. William D. Simms made an address at Leebury Common and another at Danwick Four Corners the same night, by torchlight. The gist of what he said was this: "We don't want war; but if it should come—"

The superior power of the United States, coupled with this *intransigent* attitude of the Leebury League and other similar organizations, would undoubtedly have brought Chile soon to terms, but for an unexpected international complication. It was made apparent in a certain discreetly worded diplomatic note that Chile was being supported by no less a power than Germany. Not only that, but secret service men reported day by day that the arsenals at Culmbach and Munich were working

night and day. Further, the Associated Press gained information, through a high government official whose name was for obvious reasons withheld, that Denmark was siding with Germany.

If the attitude of Chile had been offensive, the attitude of Germany became far more so. Some American medical students were expelled from one of the foremost German universities on a trumped-up charge. It was reported, and the truth of the story was not denied, that for years German music teachers had been systematically deceiving and swindling American pupils, by telling them that they had promising voices, when they patently had no such thing.

For once, the expected happened. On the twelfth day of October, 1910, came the now famous call for volunteers. The news was flashed into Leebury when the Leebury League had just gone into executive session and President Simms had led with the ace of hearts. The president dropped his cards upon the table, stood up, and in the serious, compelling voice for which he was now noted, said quietly: "Gentlemen, this diversion must cease. War has been declared."

Instantly the League rooms were in confusion. Volleys of questions were fired at the president, to which he could only reply, without perturbation: "You know as much as I do about it, gentlemen. I have only the bare announcement. I request you to go quietly to your homes and make such preparations as you think best."

Perkins, foreman at the shingle mill (with whom, however, President Simms, though owner of the mill, democratically associated as an equal), came over to his employer and said, in a voice that shook a little: "I don't suppose there's any need of my coming down to the shop in the morning, Mr. Simms?"

William D. Simms replied immediately: "Certainly you will, Henry. Things will proceed as usual till we find out all the circumstances. You know we have some big orders on hand."

The League dispersed, and William D. Simms walked slowly home, deep in

thought. He had been a man with a country since 1905, and each year he had had the country more and more with him. He could not help feeling the burden of it, now. The Call had come. It was his duty to see that the Call was answered. A mass meeting was absolutely necessary. A mass meeting meant an address, and the man to deliver that address was William D. Simms. When the sun rose next morning, Mr. Simms blew out the lamp, folded up a manuscript, wiped his brow and retired. But he smiled as he retired. For the address was all prepared.

The mass meeting at Leebury brought together more people from the surrounding country than any event since Scribner and Smith's circus pitched its tent near Leebury Common, back in the nineties. Farmers who never were able to get into the village to vote or to go to church suddenly found a way through their chores, and streamed in from all directions. There was a bandstand in the middle of the Common, and on this elevation chairs had been placed for the selectmen, town clerk, several other officials, all with their wives, and the officers of the Leebury League. The League went deep into its treasury to engage the Springhaven Cornet Band, which played from a haywagon near the bandstand.

The meeting had been called for two o'clock, sharp, and actually got started about half-past three, when the town clerk pounded on the rail of the stand, succeeded in getting approximate quiet from those nearest him, and introduced William D. Simms "to speak on the great national crisis."

William D. Simms rose with the comfortable air of a man who knows what he is going to say, and furthermore knows that he is an old hand at the business and is in no danger of breaking down from over-excitement. He smoothed out the front of his Prince Albert, shook back his cuffs and spoke.

The Patriot spoke for more than an hour. He pointed with pride to the Revolutionary War, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish War and all other wars that came within the scope

of the subject. He desired to know if there was anyone present with a drop of American blood in his veins who did not thrill with the desire to go forth and crush the enemies of the country. If such there was, let him speak up now and say so. Nobody spoke; but there was great applause. The speaker might then take it for granted that one and all were hand and heart with the government in this hour of peril. (Cries of "Yes.")

The speaker had no doubt, he said, that there would be a mighty struggle; but, he thought, a brief one. The honor of the country was at stake. Was it conceivable that the old spirit of '76 would be lacking now? (Cries of "No," and tremendous agitation.) Did anyone forget Gettysburg? Or Appomattox? Nobody did. It was also clear that the orator had his people well in hand; could sway them as he pleased; could, at the turn of a phrase, set them into the wildest mood for combat, or bring them to tears. William D. Simms knew, as he spoke, that he had never been in better form.

"And now," said the speaker, "what of the Leebury League? You want to know—you have a right to know—what the Leebury League has been doing; what it intends to do."

"Three cheers for the Leebury League!" cried somebody in the crowd, and these were given tumultuously.

William D. Simms bowed. "I thank you for the League," he said. "As president of that organization, I should like to speak for them. We have as yet held no meeting to act upon the matter, but (here he turned to the officers of the League who sat on the platform) I presume they are all of one mind."

The League officers nodded anxiously, and hung upon his words. One of them, Joseph Wells, plucked William Simms by the end of his coat and whispered: "Remember, Will, most of us are married men with children."

"I am empowered to speak for the League," continued the orator. "Let me tell you that the Leebury League will uphold the Federal Government to the bitter end; will give the last degree of



confidence to the men at Washington; will spare no energies, to the utmost, to meet this crisis with courage, with fortitude and with strength. The League stands ready, every man, to shoulder a musket and go to the front. The League stands ready to shed the last drop of its blood in the cause. These things the League will do!"

For a few moments the speaker's words were drowned by cheering. The League officers on the platform stood up, and all leaned, as if attracted by a magnet, toward the speaker; and all spoke into his ear at once. William D. Simms was seen to raise his hand benignly, and the officers sat down again.

"These things the League will do," continued William D. Simms, "and will gladly do. But—it is the sense and belief of the League that the greatest strength lies in reserve. He who puts forth his entire energy at the beginning of the great work will never, in all probability, see the end. So the League believes—and it is the purpose of the League *not to answer the first call for volunteers, but to await a second and more pressing need.* Then, with hearts aflame and naked steel in hand, this body will march to the front!"

The officers of the League, on the platform, looked dazed for a moment, and then began to applaud. It was evident that, without great restraint, they would have thrown themselves upon the speaker and embraced him madly. Other members of the League took up the applause and cheering, and soon the mob was stampeded. The hubbub was terrific. Hats were thrown in the air and recklessly trampled on the ground, though in no case by the owners. Children began to wail, boys cat-called. Never, in the memories of those present, had there been such a scene in Leebury.

William D. Simms smiled blandly upon his audience, bowed and sat down. He had done his work. He had not carried the burden of his country in vain.

"We have listened to the mighty address by our fellow townsman," said the chairman, "and our hearts respond as one. Only one man could have uttered those impassioned words, and we are

grateful to know that man as a friend and brother. We shall now call for volunteer speakers. Let any man say what is next to his heart. Don't be afraid to speak. We are all friends and neighbors."

Very few persons had observed a small, sharp-faced man worming his way through to crowd to the edge of the platform. But he had done this seemingly impossible thing; and now the small man leaped nimbly up from the ground and stood at the side of the chairman. "I'd like to say a few words," he cried, in a thin, shrill voice that was familiar to everybody.

It was Elisha Hobbs.

"Throw him down!" cried somebody. "Don't let him speak!" bawled another man. "Chuck him right off the stand!" another advised.

But now William D. Simms showed the spirit of magnanimity that lay in his breast. He jumped to his feet and with upraised hand quelled the disturbance. "Let him say what he has to say," he pleaded. "This is no time for animosities. In an hour of need, let everything else be forgotten."

The crowd stood silent, and awaited a declaration from Hobbs. 'Lish stood in thought a moment, and then began.

"I ain't got the gift of oratory," he said, "but I've got something to say, and that's more important; only you folks don't know it. I listened to this here talk by friend Simms, and I enjoyed it, the same as I enjoy good singing. But I tell you, my friends, what we want to do is come down to brass tacks.

"Now I ain't going to pretend that I think the old U. S. is totally right in this matter, because I don't think so. I may be wrong, but as I gather it one of our sailors went and got drunk somewhere down there in Chile and raised a ruction, and got hisself throwed out in the street, like any good bartender ought to do."

An ugly murmur ran through the crowd, and violent hands would have been laid on 'Lish if William D. Simms had not interceded again. The Patriot knew whatever 'Lish said would do no harm.

"This country, as I see it, has been going round with a chip on its shoulder for some time," continued 'Lish, "and between you and me I shouldn't wonder if it was going to be knocked off good and proper. We're due for a fall, just the same as any other over-proud people. But in spite of these being the facts, it comes right down to this: we've got to fight. We've gone and got into the hot water, and we've got to pull ourselves out. Now who's going to do the fighting? Somebody's got to, else we'll get the tar whaled out of us. The League ain't going to fight—*yit*. The world is full of folks that will fight—*but not yit*. Well, I'm going to fight *now*, and have it over with. Darned if it don't go against my grain to shut up shop and take chances on getting all shot up, but it's got to be did. I'm going to enlist tonight, over at Springhaven. Who's going with me? I want all those that are going to step right up here and give me their names."

The unexpected turn of Hobbs's talk stilled the rising tumult. Somebody began clapping hands. All eyes were turned to the sound, and it was seen that the clapper was Pete Dubois, the blacksmith, somewhat the worse for liquor. Pete strode up to the platform, knocking folks aside as he plowed his way.

"By Gar, I go weet' you, 'Lish," he cried. "We leeck dem dam Jairmans an' grab Awlsawce-Lorraine away from dem."

"Number one," said 'Lish.

Next came Giuseppe Capodilupo, the cobbler. He was a swarthy little man, all enthusiasm and physical movement. He wriggled through the crowd, and was hauled up on the platform by Pete Dubois.

There was a pause and much talk. Then Kasan, a Russian Jew peddler, who was accustomed to make the round of the surrounding villages in his wagon, swapping tinware for old rags and rubbers, amazed the people by stepping forward.

"Good for you, Abe!" cried 'Lish.

At this point two grammar school boys, about seventeen years old, leaped

up on the platform. They were immediately collared and dragged down by their respective fathers, however, and instead of marching off to war they were marched home to supper.

After this there were no more volunteers. Joe Stearns, the one-eyed grocer's clerk, signified his intention of volunteering, but it was generally concluded that he was playing to the gallery, knowing that his physical disability would protect him against being taken at his word.

"All here!" announced 'Lish Hobbs drily. "First train in the morning, boys—and don't back out. And don't be afraid of anything happening to the town while we're gone. The League will take good care of it."

After that the meeting dispersed. There was a chilliness in the air—a certain unexpressed disquiet—that terminated the affair rather differently from what William Simms had planned. Yet many men (and all the members of the League of course) came up and shook hands with him, and thanked him for his public service. To the most favored of them Mr. Simms confided this thought: "*The first call always takes the scum.*"

There was no war. It will be necessary to relate how the country was inflamed with the spirit of battle and how that inflammation was allayed; how the afternoon newspapers secured the most exclusive misinformation at enormous expense; how innocent workmen were arrested as spies, and condemned to have their pictures published every day for a week; how Gen. Julius B. Hornblade sold a number of articles on "The Strategy of the Battle of Bunker Hill" at thirty cents a word; how the moving picture operators risked neck and limb at the drills of awkward squads; how the price of picture postcards rose to ten cents apiece; and how the price of kerosene oil was lifted—and never lowered again.

All this had now passed into history, and the month afterward found the most prominent position of the first pages of the newspapers given up to a story of how Elsie Janis came to go on the stage. Only the pensions remained.

The matter was settled by an agreement between the United States and Germany. By this arrangement the United States was to have a solid interest in the Chilean nitrate fields, and Germany was to supply, in perpetuity, all the naval armaments used by the Chilean government. Chile thus emerged with her honor intact.

Elisha Hobbs, Pete Dubois, Abe Kasan and Giuseppe Capodilupo spent three weeks at Charleston, S. C., and were then dismissed from further duty.

The four volunteers came back to Leebury. There was a slight, ineffectual talk of receiving them with a band when they arrived; but the war spirit had waned too much. So they came home to no music; only a few idlers and school-boys being at the railroad station when the train pulled in. 'Lish reopened his wheelwright shop; Giuseppe went back to cobbling shoes; Abe's horse had died in the meantime, and he had to return to the pack; and another and more reliable blacksmith had usurped Pete Dubois's place.

'Lish Hobbs was silent, but he was watchful to see whether public sentiment had changed toward him. He had ambitions. The town elections were not far away, and 'Lish believed that he could, on the strength of his volunteer service, wrest the selectmanship from William D. Simms. What made him more and more certain of this was the demeanor of the people toward him. Those who had snubbed him, after his interpellation in 1905, now granted him at least polite recognition; while those who had turned from him somewhat less, now showed cordiality.

There is no man but has a few admirers. Even in his lowest days, 'Lish had friends who stayed by him, believed in him and accepted his views. There were about eight or ten of those followers. In February, less than a month before town meeting, 'Lish stirred himself among this little host, with the result that he announced himself a candidate for the office of First Selectman. The announcement was published in the Leebury *Intelligencer* as follows:

For First Selectman

VOTE FOR

ELISHA HOBBS.

He went; others stayed at home.

There was no need of embellishing this reference. It was perfectly understood to be the beginning of the undermining of William D. Simms, Simms to reply to this advertisement with a half-page broadside in poster type (at regular political advertising rates) but without avail.

"I will not dignify him with a reply," said Mr. Simms. "When the time comes, I shall speak."

The next issue of the *Intelligencer* contained another advertisement of 'Lish's candidacy; this time slightly varied:

For First Selectman

VOTE FOR

ELISHA HOBBS.

He shouldered a gun; others talked.

Once more William D. Simms was begged to do something. Several of his closest friends (among them the corresponding secretary of the Leebury League) came to him and earnestly advised action. "'Lish is making converts every day," they said. "Of course we know he isn't much good, but his advertisements are creating an impression."

"Let him go ahead," replied William D. Simms placidly. "I'll attend to him when the time comes." The Patriot could not be persuaded to say a word in his own behalf.

In truth, so sure of his power did Mr. Simms feel that he made no preparation for the town elections. It was whispered about that 'Lish was preparing a red-hot speech to be delivered at the Town Hall in March. It was said that every once in a while, in his shop, he would drop his tools, seize a pencil and jot down something in a memorandum book; and this "something" was pretty clearly germane to the election. William D. Simms heard the gossip and smiled a superior and confident smile.

To his faithful little circle Elisha Hobbs hinted that he was gathering material for a speech that would be remembered. "There ain't going to be anything flowery about it," said 'Lish, "but just plain hard everyday facts, the

kind that will make our folks sit up and take notice."

That March town meeting in Leebury was a fit conclusion to the excitement of the last twelve months. A heavy snow had fallen a few days before, and got well packed down for good sledding. Consequently men came in from the outskirts that seldom were seen at town meeting. 'Lish counted especially on these rurals. The members of Leebury League he could not expect to win; but he felt that solid truth would impress the outlanders.

It was perfectly understood that the meeting would take the form of a joint debate between William D. Simms and Elisha Hobbs. When the moderator called the meeting to order the hall was jammed to the doors with voters and spectators.

Those who were nearest to 'Lish said afterward that when he rose to speak he had a kind of wolfish glare in his eyes, and that his shrill voice cut the heavy atmosphere like a keen blade.

"My friends," he began, "as I have said before, I ain't got any oratorical gift. I leave that ornamental hinky-dink business to others. I'm running for First Selectman of this town, and I want your votes, and that's what I'm going to talk for. . . ."

In that strain, frank and acid, 'Lish recounted something of the recent events. He did not fail to point out the pretensions of patriotism made by the Leebury League and William D. Simms in particular; he coined the bitter epithet "Second Call Men" in reference to these; and got a loud laugh by shouting that when men were wanted to go to the front, the Leebury League, including William D. Simms, "went to the back!"

"I don't pretend we did any fighting," he said, "but we were there in case there was any fighting to be did; and where was William D. Simms?" 'Lish waited for the question to sink in, and then replied, in his shrillest: "At home."

At precisely half past eleven, to the accompaniment of much handclapping and cheering from his side of the house,

William D. Simms rose to speak. His hair was brushed back in thick waves, displaying to the most advantage his high forehead; with a low collar, a simple black ribbon tie, in the manner of the old statesman, a long, new Prince Albert, with the Leebury League button defiantly in the buttonhole, William D. Simms looked every inch the orator he was. As he raised his hand for attention, a hush fell upon the house.

William D. Simms had made no preparation; such was his scorn of Hobbs. After breakfast that morning he had smoked a cigar and ruminated upon the matter in hand. Then he went to his desk and rummaged among a bundle of old patriotic addresses, finally choosing the one marked "Royal Arcanum, 1905." He read it over, and it pleased him. "I couldn't do a bit better today," he said to himself.

Thus, at eleven thirty, in town meeting assembled, the citizens of Leebury heard the rich baritone of Simms begin: "Fellow Citizens and Friends."

It was the same address, word for word, that some of those present had heard in 1905; and they rose to it. People like to hear things with which they are already familiar—about which all necessary thinking has already been performed—old music, old sermons, old speeches.

The beautiful voice of William D. Simms rolled through the hall, billow after billow. Each apostrophe was greeted with murmurs of delight. Each period brought forth a mighty cheer. And then came the peroration:

"From the rock-ribbed shores of Maine to the sun-kissed sands of Florida, from the Golden Gate to tempestuous Hatteras, we are one undivided people—one people, one flag. Let us pledge ourselves, at this eventful moment, one and all—"

The vote for First Selectman was: William D. Simms, 414; Elisha Hobbs, 12.

Not long afterward William D. Simms was elected to the Governor's Council; and thereafter was always addressed as "Colonel Simms."



## RIEMEN'S FARM

By O. David

THE sun blazed down with blistering fierceness on the scorched veldt, stretching as far as could be seen in a drab monotone, its level broken only here and there by a few boulders. Behind one of these, three unkempt figures, khaki-clad, were crouching, seeking what shelter they could from the fiery rays, and from other dangers of a more immediate kind.

"Not a bloomin' shred o' baccy, either," growled Piggy Jackson, sucking at an empty, dirty clay pipe.

"An' a good job, too, cully," retorted Wilkins; "the blessed stench of yore baccy would draw every blinkin' Boer in the Colony over 'ere."

"Ho—well, o' course we can't all 'ave your 'igh class taste in Woodbines, Mr. Wilkins."

"Shut up snarlin', you two," snapped Lance Corporal Moberley. "Ain't it hot enough without you two a-warming of things up?"

"Wot I says is, let's cut for it and chawnce it."

"Very good idea, I don't think," retorted Moberley, "just to show them Boers where the convoy is. No, you bloomin' well wait till I give the word, which won't be till this jolly old furnace has put himself to bed."

"Orl rite, cocky; don't want to lose yer independent command for a bit, eh?"—saying which, Jackson rose to his feet to stretch his six feet something.

Whiz—ping—a bullet struck the rock just below him.

"Blimy, must be Boers about!" he ejaculated, hastily getting under cover.

"I always said you was a clever bloke, Piggy. How did you guess it? Mighty close, too—must be under the next rock."

The three men sat for a while in silence. Sent out the previous night to locate a certain Boer farm suspected of concealing rifles and ammunition, they had failed to do so, and had likewise missed rejoining the convoy at the appointed spot. Thus, under the guidance of Lance Corporal Moberley they were waiting, as well concealed as might be, intending to try and find their way to their column after dark. And now their retreat had been discovered.

"That bein' so," said Moberley, that astute commanding officer, "I will 'ave resort to strattygem. I will try to ascertain the strength of the opposin' force." Placing his khaki hat on his rifle, he raised it cautiously until the brim appeared above the edge of the boulder. But no shots came.

"The enemy 'as apparently sloped," said Moberley, turning round. "*Hal-lo*, who are you? No, you don't—hands up, quick!"

Creeping round the boulder was a tall young Boer, bronzed, bearded and characteristically dirty. On finding the barrel of a rifle pointed at him in unpleasant proximity, the Boer realized that surrender was inevitable. With a guttural oath, he raised his hands.

"Here, you two, search him," said Moberley, still covering the Boer.

"Come along, old cock," said Piggy Jackson, "we ain't a-goin' to hurt—Ah! Baccy!" And he pulled out a stained canvas bag, filled with coarse Boer tobacco, which he was proceeding to put inside his own tunic, until he was peremptorily ordered to put it down. The prisoner's arms and few personal trifles were laid on the ground.

"Sit down," said Moberley, himself

sitting cross-legged with his rifle handily pointed at the Boer.

"Whaat you goin' to do with me, eh?" asked the latter.

"Send 'im 'ome and put 'im in the zoo, the pretty dear," growled Wilkins.

"Prisoner of war, my boy, desperit character; 'and 'im over to Bobs," suggested Jackson.

"Where did you learn your English?" demanded Moberley.

The Boer grinned. "London—Exhibition," he replied.

Jackson glanced at him. "Wot, was you one of them blinking fellows in the Boer village two years ago?"

"Yaas—your women, they liked us—ah, yes, they ran after us!"

"Dirty swob," snapped Jackson. "I'd like to break your neck. It was one of you chaps bolted—"

"Dry up, Jackson; leave the blinkin' prisoner alone. I'm goin' to make him usef'ul, I am." Thus spoke Lance Corporal Moberley in command of a force of two. "Listen to me—do you know Riemen's farm?"

The prisoner looked up sharply. "Whaat if I do, eh?"

"You're going to guide us there, that's all."

"And what if I say—no?"

"You're too downy a bird for that, my lad," replied Moberley, shifting the position of his rifle a little.

"Oh, well—you come then; I show you if I must."

"Not just yet, my son; wait till evening."

The four men relapsed into a watchful silence. The temporary excitement caused by the sudden apparition and capture of their prisoner having evaporated, the three soldiers once more resigned themselves to their dull task of waiting, while the Boer, with dogged sullenness, slowly chewing a plug of his tobacco, eyed each of his captors in turn.

Slowly the sun's rays shifted, becoming more oblique. The eerie hush peculiar to the veldt seemed to become intensified as light gave way to the brief moment of twilight which divides day from night beneath the Southern Cross.

At length Moberley rose. "Now," he said.

Jackson and Wilkins placed themselves on either side of the Boer. Moberley, with rifle at the carry, brought up the rear. "March," he said; "and no tricks, mind you."

"Aall right," muttered the Boer, and the little procession started.

Rapidly they covered the ground, the Boer leading the way in the darkness like a bloodhound on the trail.

"Licks me how these blighters finds their way on this blooming veldt—not a tree to steer by," ejaculated Wilkins.

"Eyes like cats, and scent like a badger," growled Jackson. "'Ow much further to the bloomin' shanty, mate, eh?"

"Soon there naow," returned the Boer—"and if they hear us coming, you will see!"

"Gag him, Jackson," commanded Moberley briefly.

Jackson hastened to carry out his superior officer's order, and succeeded, with not too great an excess of gentleness, in gagging the prisoner with a handkerchief of indescribable hue. Another ten minutes passed. The Boer stopped. In the distance a light twinkled.

"Riemen's farm?" queried Moberley.

The prisoner nodded.

"I'm going to take your gag out. Any treachery and you're a dead man—see?" Jackson removed the gag and Moberley continued: "You will tell old man Riemen that we want to search the farm."

"I am Riemen; the farm's empty."

"Who lighted that lamp, then?"

Riemen grunted.

Moberley considered. "Wilkins," he said, "you will go forward as a scouting party of one and reconnoitre the position. 'Urry up!'"

Wilkins disappeared into the dark. Moberley sat down.

Suddenly the Boer spoke. "My wife—she lighted that lamp." He glanced uneasily from one man to the other. Then, "She's—English," he added.

Moberley shrugged his shoulders. "No accountin' for tastes," he said.

Piggy Jackson started and stared at the prisoner. "Boer village at the Exhibition—an English wife—oh, my Gawd!" He swore softly under his breath and gripped his rifle tighter. "Oh, my Gawd!" he repeated, and went paler under his tan.

"Who goes there?" Moberley snapped out the words sharply, bringing his rifle to his shoulder.

"It's me—Wilkins." The scouting party of one loomed up out of the night.

"Well?"

"Seems quite deserted—no one on the look-out, only one horse in the stables—this blighter's, I reckon."

"Well, we'll have something to report when we rejoins, anyhow. Let's get on."

Slowly and cautiously the little group approached the farmhouse past stables and outhouses, until they reached the entrance. The silence was unbroken; save for the one light twinkling in a window, there was no sign of life.

"Wilkins, you will remain on guard here at the entrance." Automatically Wilkins saluted. "Come along, Mr. Blooming Riemens, welcome us to your home—and no larks, mind you!"

They entered, and found themselves in a typical Boer farmer's living room. On the stove in the corner steam was ascending with a savory smell from a stewpot.

"H'm!" said Moberley. "Where's your wife?" As though in reply, a shot rang out sharply, followed by a cry. The three men looked at each other. "I'll keep an eye on the prisoner—go and see what's happened."

Jackson went through the doorway.

"Got me this time, Piggy." Wilkins staggered to the wall.

"No, no, old pal—who was it?"

"Upstairs—the window."

Jackson took him by the arm. "Where did they get you, mate?"

"In the back—the beasts. Shot from behind."

"You're not done for yet," growled Jackson, endeavoring to staunch the blood that flowed from a wound in the other man's back.

"Yes, I'm done for this time, Piggy—

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but it's rough to go out with a hole in the back like a coward."

"No one'll ever think that while I'm about, old cock," said Jackson—"and I'm after that bloke upstairs; he's got to pay for this." As he spoke Piggy half dragged, half carried his comrade into the farmhouse. Tenderly he laid his pal on the floor and briefly told Moberley what had occurred.

"You shall suffer for this." The lance corporal was addressing the Boer. "You're supposed to be a peaceful farmer. You fire on us—and if we find any concealed arms here, you shall be shot—see?"

From overhead came the sound of someone moving. "Up you go, Jackson. See who it is."

Jackson cocked his rifle and went out. Keeping close to the wall, he crept upstairs. The door at the top opened and a stream of light flooded the stairs. In the doorway stood a woman with a revolver pointed at the soldier. Then eyes met.

"Mary—oh, my God, Mary!"

"Jim—oh!" The woman bolted back into the room. In three steps Piggy had caught her up and seized her.

"For Gawd's sake don't kill me, Jim, don't kill me! 'Ave pity!"

"Pity—wot do you know of pity? What did you think of pity when you left me for a dirty Boer—or when you shot my best pal in the back?"

"Oh, Jim—for the sake of the old days—I'm a coward, oh, don't—you ain't a murderer!"

Jackson drew himself up.

"No—I'm a soldier. Give up your revolver." The woman flung it from her.

"Anyone else here?"

"No—before Gawd there ain't."

"Any arms concealed?"

"Yes—under the bed—in the boxes."

"Right—downstairs with you."

Silently and with bowed head the woman came to the door. Gripping her by the arm, Jackson led her downstairs.

Moberley stood up. "Well, Jackson?"

"Quantity of Mausers and cartridges in boxes under the bed."

"Who's this?" Moberley indicated the woman with a jerk of the thumb.

"Woman that shot Wilkins—caught her with a revolver in her hand."

He turned to the woman. "What have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing. It's true."

"An Englishwoman, too. Well—thank your stars we don't make war on women. You can say good-bye to your Dutchman, though."

Riemen started. "Whaat you going to do—eh?"

"Shoot you," said Moberley curtly.

Riemen sprang up—a torrent of curses poured from him, as he seized the chair on which he had been sitting.

"Drop that," shouted Moberley.

The Boer was swinging the chair above his head.

Cr-rack! Jackson had fired the revolver which he had taken from the woman. Riemen, with a curse and a groan, lurched forward and fell on his face. The woman gave a cry and flung herself on his body.

"Cowards—beasts, murderers!" she shrieked. "'E was good to me."

"Someone else was good to you once," said Jackson.

"Gawd—I never loved you—never!"

"Who's the woman, Jackson?"

"Don't know—"

"Liar—I'm his wife, sir."

"She's not. I've never seen her before—she's barmy."

"Ah!" Moberley looked down at the woman.

Wilkins moved uneasily and supported himself on one elbow.

"All right, sir," he said, "I'm ready—but I wish the hole worn't in my back."

His hand slowly came to the salute.

"Right, sir," he said feebly, "I'm coming." And he fell back.

Jackson knelt down by his side. "You're all right, anyhow, old pal. Gawd knows a white man when he sees one." With a laugh that was more than half a sob, he lifted the dead man in his arms and carried him outside. Presently he returned, brushing the earth from his knees. Moberley gripped him by the hand. Their eyes met.

"She's told me."

"Lies. What are you going to do?"

"Burn the farm. Arms concealed and their oath broken. It's my duty."

Quickly they set about piling up twigs and straw from the outhouses. Then Moberley called the woman out.

"What are you going to do—oh, don't shoot me—don't—"

"We don't shoot women—we're going to fire the farm."

"Oh!" A wail rising to a shriek broke from her lips. "You can't do that—you can't! You've killed my man, ain't that enough?"

Then Jackson spoke, sternly and deliberately.

"Enough! If you was to roast in that there farm for one hundred years, it wouldn't be enough for what you and the likes of you makes men go through."

He strode past her and seized the lamp.

"Go on—out of it."

"Jim—Jim!" She flung herself before him, clutching his knees. "Jim, 'ave mercy!" He pushed her away.

A trickle of flame ran along the base of the woodpile, like water from a tap. A thin column of smoke rose. A sudden flare as the straw caught fire—and the blaze leapt up, lurid against the night.

A hundred yards away the soldiers paused. Moberley chuckled. "Another one gone!" he exclaimed. Then suddenly: "Where's the woman?"

Jackson started. In their preoccupation neither had noticed what had become of her.

Suddenly, from the upper window of the house, above the leaping flames, came peal after peal of insane laughter.

"Gawd—she's gone back to the house! We can't leave her there!" Jackson turned and ran.

Moberley shouted after him: "Come back, Piggy—you can't get in—there's all those cartridges!"

Still Jackson ran. And then, even as he reached the outhouses, the night was torn by a deafening explosion—high in the air flew sparks, flames, beams of wood in a fountain of fire.

Then darkness—and once more the eerie hush of the veldt.



## SILENCE UNBROKEN

By Norvell Harrison

**S**OUTH CAROLINA is a land of flat fields and endless marshes. Here and there are forests of pine trees, standing straight and nakedly majestic; but other trees, save oak, are scarce, and when the first touch of frost has defoliated these, turning the red and gold of their fallen leaves to a crisp, perishable brown, there is nothing to mark the colorless miles but the limitless stretch of cotton fields.

In a word, the landscape is vastly monotonous; and the passengers in the day coach on a southbound express, on a certain afternoon in late November, found little in it to enliven their journey. All—there were only six—turned their backs upon the achromatic wastelands. The man, who had for two hours been staring with unchanged expression through the dirt-begrimed window pane, folded his overcoat beneath his head, as if to prepare for sleep.

There was something about this man that instantly attracted your attention. His face bore traces of great physical weariness, or, it might have been, mental suffering. There were purple shadows underneath his eyes; the lines in his face were cut deeply; hollows sucked in the pallor of either cheek.

Even in his recumbent position he gave the impression of being continually in motion. In his absolute unconsciousness of the persons about him he appeared completely detached from his surroundings, a thing apart.

In the front of the car there were three little boys. For an hour they had been intent on watching two women who by means of a finger alphabet and many signs and gestures kept up a soundless conversation. There had not been for

some time a break in this wordless exchange of ideas. Only occasionally a harsh guttural announced that one of them tried to speak the language denied her. At intervals their words were punctuated by smiles. No movement that either made escaped the eagerly watchful children; the absorption of all three was absolute.

When the train stopped, and the porter, hurrying tardily, came to tell them that their destination had been reached, they left reluctantly, looking covertly back at that which had been to them a new and wonderful revelation. The cars, rolling out again into uninhabited country, left them standing in the door of the station waiting room, still with their faces turned toward the window by which the gesticulating women sat.

When the conductor shut the door, as the train jolted into motion again, the man in the rear of the car got to his feet and strode down the aisle. There was apparently no object in his sudden movement. When he reached the front of the car, he stood restless and indeterminate before he finally turned and retraced his steps. After a moment he sat down as suddenly as he had got up, this time in a seat across the aisle from the two women. He did not look at them. He appeared, indeed, hardly conscious of their proximity. It was not until the sunshine, shifting fitfully with the swaying motion of the train, fell warm and cinder-shot upon his long crossed hands, that he turned his head mechanically toward the raised blind beneath which the bar of light fell. As his eye fell upon the two women, sitting, facing each other, with rapidly moving fingers and still, useless lips, he seemed

for the first time to realize their nearness. A vague recognition of their maimed condition—a sort of transient pity—swept across his face. He watched them apathetically. Then all at once a vivid, irrepressible, eager light shot into his eyes; he leaned hurriedly forward, his eyes fascinatedly following their easy movements.

Presently one of them got up, and, hatted and gloved, stepped into the aisle. A moment later the other rose also, as the unsociable white roofs of a straggling village appeared; and they went together to the platform. There they parted with an infinite number of significant gestures; when the train stopped one got off and waved her wordless good-bye, standing, a pitiable figure, as the train moved off.

When the station had been left far behind, the one whose belongings still lay scattered over the seat turned from the open door. The man who had taken the seat across from hers watched her as she came up the aisle. Her face was fresh-colored and young, full of a sympathetic responsiveness to life. In her eyes there lurked the shadow of pleasant thoughts; her parted lips looked as if they might just have been in the act of framing some affectionate parting word.

When she reached her seat, she busied herself in rearranging her things, adjusting herself more comfortably to the increase of space. Her figure in its stooping position showed graceful, womanly. Her movements were spontaneous and unstudied.

The man, wrenching his gaze from her, got up and walked to the back of the car. Between them stretched the two long empty rows of seats. The country through which they were passing fell behind them devoid of sign of human life; the cars in front of and behind them were remote in spite of their contiguity. The visible world was theirs—theirs by the right of undisputed possession, of solitary occupation. When the woman straightened herself from her completed task, she met the compelling gaze of the man standing facing her. They looked at one another while you might count ten

seconds; then he came swiftly down the car, and reaching her side, spoke.

"I'm going to talk to you," he said. His voice was resolute; it somehow suggested suppressed emotion. "You can't hear me. You can't understand what I'm saying. My God, I've got to talk to somebody! I'll lose my mind if I don't. It's got to be to you. Do you understand? *You!*"

After one quick backward step, she stood perfectly still. One hand, half raised to perform some forgotten office, was arrested in midair. A faint, wavering color crept startled into her cheeks. Her eyes stared back at him.

"It's got to be you," he repeated. He came a little nearer. "I hope you are not afraid." There was a sort of impersonal apology mingling with the curious quality of his voice. As if by effort she withdrew her eyes and looked vaguely to either side of her. Something of appeal in her attitude seemed to reach the man.

"She thinks I'm mad." He said the words aloud. Then, as if seized by a sudden inspiration, he raised both his hands and spelt with his fingers, awkwardly, laboriously: "I want to talk to you. We are both alone. Perhaps we can amuse each other."

Her eyes left his face to follow the cheering movement of his fingers. Then the color on her cheeks deepened—deepened until after a moment's increase it became a slow, curious smile. She gave back his look, steadily, with level eyes.

Then she raised her own small fingers. They were capable fingers, womanly ones. Skillfully, with perfect ease, she spelled:

"I do not mind. You may talk to me." She moved her cloth jacket from the back of the seat and sat down. As she drew her skirts about her he took the place beside her. An opened window to the left of them let in a little cool breeze, which stirred the fallen sheets of a newspaper at their feet. She turned upon him eyes which were full of an absorbed curiosity; but he was looking steadily ahead of him—seemed almost to have forgotten that she was there.

Then suddenly, while she still waited

for him to speak, he started back, shading his eyes with one long, nervous hand.

"It's there again!" he cried. He pointed with the fingers of the other hand at the fly-specked window pane. "Falling from the sky itself. It isn't possible—but it's true, all the same." His voice mounted to a wail of despair; the arm that he held out shook impotently. "I have seen it in all sorts of other places," he went on. "I've seen the ribbon on a woman's dress turn to it before my very eyes—and the sunlight, falling on a patch of dugout ground, show it—and the leaves on a dying tree drip with it. But I've never seen the heavens send it forth in a great stream like that. I—I didn't dream it could be!" As he leaned nearer to her the woman's lips whitened. His alarming proximity evidently frightened her.

Outside a passing cloud obscured the sun, so that only a dim red reflection shone through; upon the tops of the pine trees the light fell even fainter—a thin transparent, meagerly pink mist. The man, again leaning forward, fastened his eyes upon it.

"Blood!" He pronounced the word fearfully. "Blood—I know it is. Blood everywhere, over everything. Am I to go on all the rest of my life seeing it about me—springing from sources I know can't produce it, drowning and deluging and swallowing up things and people that I know have never known the smell of it? God in heaven!"

The woman shrank from him. He turned his bloodshot eyes toward her at once. There was a spasmodic shrinking in his movements, an involuntary recoil from the living nearness of her presence. Then, as remembrance came back to him, the fear in his eyes faded. He regarded her adjectively. After an interval his gaze passed to the square of dirty glass beside her. The bar of reddish light had gone, disappearing as suddenly as it had come. When he leaned back in his seat, with a quick breath of relief, he met her look, direct, timorous. Something about her, a look of alert expectancy, a wide awake attentiveness, seemed to indicate that she was waiting for him to speak. He watched her in

silence. Then uncertainly, as if not fully realizing what he did, he lifted his fingers and spelled with labored care:

"The South Carolina scenery is not much to look at."

The shrug of her shoulders emphasized her unspoken answer. Through the open window the freshening wind swept a storm of cinders full upon them, then playfully coquetted with the loose pages of the newspaper on the floor. When the several sheets fluttered lightly to the hem of her skirt, she stooped and gathered them up. The triviality of what she did, its complete non-understanding, seemed to strike the man sharply, reassure him. He turned toward her with an ugly deliberateness. His narrowing eyes smoldered. There was a new note in his voice when he spoke.

"I'm going to tell you all about it," he said, "because—because your face looks womanly and sweet and good. Though you can't hear a word I say, I'm going to pretend you can. You can read of it in the papers—I dare say you have read of it already—but that's not at all the same as hearing about it from one who really knows." He twisted his face nearer hers. "Do you know what it is," he said, his voice all at once rising painfully, "to stand over something which was a person, and see his face grow cold and—and *dead*? To know that as long as you live there will never be any sight on God's earth good enough or pure enough or beautiful enough to blot out the memory of that face? That you will never find any perfume strong enough to strangle the stench of his blood? No, you don't know. Of course you don't. You've never been quite close to a person, quite, quite close—and yet been separated from him by a hundred living moments! Or, if you've ever watched beside a deathbed, you've seen the person die quietly, rightly, at peace with everybody, forgiving all who ever wronged him. A dying person ought to forgive—ought to tell you so with his last gasping breath. He ought not to go without promising you that he will not come back to haunt you or to persecute you, without declaring that he will ask the Awful Being up there to—to

—pardon you. He ought not to go—go from this great alive, real world to that unknown place without telling you that—that it's all right." The choking of his heart seemed to strangle him. "Your face looks womanly and sweet and good," he murmured. "But if you could hear me—God!" One hand, seeking to stay the trembling of the other, fell limply against it. Upon the knotted veins of his forehead great beads of sweat stood out like raindrops.

The woman sat passive, her eyes fixed on the back of the seat ahead of her. She might have been trying to solve the riddle of his speaking to her; or perhaps, baffled by the complex nature of the situation, she sat, discomfited by the realization of her own limitations. When the man spoke again, what he said was no longer directed to her. He was looking straight before him, and he spoke as if what he said had been said often to himself.

"They accuse his servants. Bah! The idea is absurd. Could an old man, weak and thin-blooded and afraid, and a young silly girl hate enough to go to him in the loneliness and dark and with a knife kill him?" He lingered over the word "hate," devouring it with his tone. "No! Wanting his money couldn't have made them hate him like that. They felt for him only fear—fear and contempt; contempt for his rigorous watch over his ill gotten gains, and fear of his sharp, cruel tongue. They *couldn't* hate him as I did!"

He stopped abruptly. The train, jolting unevenly up a slight incline, sent forth a shrill, piercing whistle. No depot or building of any sort was in sight; the shriek of the engine seemed an involuntary wail because of the surrounding dreariness. After a second's pause the man broke into speech again, as if he was summing up for himself facts which he knew by heart.

"Out there, where we were both equal, I didn't hate him. I didn't think of him at all. His face was no worse than a dozen other faces about us. I never guessed the blackness of his soul. When I came away, with all Jake Chalmer's money in the pouch at my belt, I never

dreamed of his following me." The words were said in a reminiscent voice, speculative even. Into the man's passionate condemnation there had crept a curious wonder—a longing to search out the truth about something unremembered, belonging to another life. "There were plenty of others," he went on, "that I knew would follow me; but he hadn't been with us long enough to know that stealing was our one unforgivable crime, and he didn't care about Jake—about anybody but himself. He wasn't with those who hunted me for days, sorry for Jake, sorry for me, too, but ready to hang me when they found me. He didn't care enough for that. It was only now, when he had something to gain by it, now when I'd left far, far behind me that life with its dreadful, indecent memories and its old unfamiliar ways of doing and living. Out there I didn't know the moral wrong I did when I took Jake's money. It was only when I came away among other people, people who lived clean, right lives, that I guessed. And when I sent Jake's money to him, saying I'd come back and swing if he wanted it, I meant it. Jake's widow understood, when she wrote me that she didn't want my blood on her hands, that I wasn't entirely to blame for being a thief and a gambler. Why couldn't he have understood, too?"

His sentences fell in an unbroken sequence. The woman at his side seemed completely forgotten.

"He didn't want to understand. When he taunted me, threatened me with exposure, and I tried to tell him that that motherless, homeless kid who'd stolen money and made off with it was not I—he laughed at me! Oh, I ought to have known, that first day, how it would end. When he saw me—recognized me, after twenty years of separation and changed life—and took me off to tell me that if he kept silence—kept from telling my family and friends who and what I was—I must pay for it—I ought to have known that that was only the beginning, that he would follow me, threaten me, bleed me, until one of us gave way. I did know then. I only waited because—until I had no more



money. Then, when he threatened to tell my wife—that day—I knew I could wait no longer. She wouldn't have believed him! She would have told him straightly that the boy of whom he spoke was not the cultured, honorable gentleman she had married and of whom she could think no wrong. Oh, she wouldn't have allowed him to think that she believed—or cared. But if he had told her I— Oh, it couldn't be! I couldn't have let him tell her!"

The woman slowly turned her head from the window. With the going of the sun, the color in her cheeks had faded. She looked tired, depressed. The eyes which dropped to her lap after a moment's glance at the man's face were sad eyes.

Off in the west the sun was dropping behind a bank of opaque cloud. The trees and fences farthest from it, untouched by its fickle light, showed gray and gloomy in the coming darkness of the declining day. At the side of the railroad track a little stream kept close to the iron rails. The train rumbled noisily. When it had reached the other side, gaining speed once more, the man sprang to his feet. He towered above the woman, speaking directly to her.

"I couldn't let him tell her," the man went on. "So I—I did it! There was no one else there—only he and I. They will never know who it was—never! I came away quickly and left him. And they will never know!" The exultant ring of his voice matched and strove with the triumphant light in his eyes. As he stood in front of the silent, inert woman, he seemed recreated, filled with a hope which brought life with it. He leaned his head back until it rested against the straight plane of his interlaced fingers; the triumphant light in his eyes gave place to a cunning gleam.

"I could have stayed there in New York with it, close to the house which held it, and they wouldn't have guessed. The papers are full of it—the whole country is talking of the murder of the man who had no enemies, whose servants killed him for his gold. And yet his—his murderer could—could have stayed among them. I could have discussed it

with all of them, have wondered who his murderer was and speculated as to why anyone should have felt enmity toward such a harmless, inoffensive old man. Not one of them would have suspected. They would have listened to me and passed on to accuse his servants, those poor wretches who dared not disobey his slightest word." He shuddered; his hands clutched one another till the purpled blood settled about the nails. "They'll let them go," he said in tones of strong conviction. "Oh, yes, they'll let them off. They can't prove anything against them, really. It—it will be all right." He sat down, dropping his hands at his sides. "If they don't send them away," he said, speaking unevenly, "I'll—I swear to God I'll go back. My wife would understand. The money—she'd know it wasn't my fault. And this—other thing—she would—would understand—that—too. She would—" He turned, as if in direct appeal, to the woman. Then his voice died away, helpless.

The train, with a sickening, jarring cessation of motion, hissed itself to a standstill. Close to the engine the shapeless red of a water tank loomed, and not far away the pointed profile of a church steeple indicated civilization.

The woman, stooping, picked up the yellow valise at her feet and rose. Placing it on the seat she had left vacant, she opened it, and from its bulging sides drew forth a blue folded veil and a pair of gloves. The veil she proceeded to arrange about her hat; then drawing a clean pocket handkerchief from the handbag at her side, she began to flick the cinders from the rumpled folds of her dress. The man's eyes, focused suddenly upon her, were perturbed, inimical, full of a growing surprise. Then in a flash he seemed to remember. He watched her, breathing deeply, striving evidently to grow calm. After a moment he got up dazedly.

When she had placed the bag upon the seat she stepped back and endeavored to reach the rack above her head. Divining vaguely what it was she wished, he reached the umbrella down and handed it to her. Then, as she began to pull on

her gloves, he leaned toward her all at once, his long nervous hand lying heavily upon the red back of the seat.

"You little helpless, wronged creature," he said, his voice vibrating with a sudden compassion, "you pitiful, useless little thing! You can't hear—but can't you feel? God in heaven! I've told you what would set the world, or a piece of it, on fire—what would send me to hell itself! And you haven't heard or seen or felt!"

With her valise and umbrella in one hand, she gathered up her skirts with the other and took a step toward the aisle. He did not shift his position. His hands, wandering aimlessly along the dusty plush, made intricate, unconscious figures.

"It must be pretty hard on you," he said, his eyes full of pity upon her face. "Why, you can't tell a—a blackguard from a respectable gentleman, and you can't prevent either from confiding in you. I'm sorry for you—even now when I'm so sorry for myself."

He moved back. As she passed him with lowered head, he took her valise from her hand, then, with a mechanical remembering, got his hat from where it lay a few seats behind them and followed her to the door. She threw him a swift look over her shoulder, one which, it seemed, conveyed but a dubious gratitude.

The train had stopped before the long wooden platform of a smoke-colored, dingy station. The woman, standing poised upon the top step of the car, hesitated for the tenth part of a second before descending. There were people loitering close to the car, a heterogeneous collection of men and boys, white and colored. A little apart from them, nearer to the car, were two men engaged in earnest conversation. Further down the platform some little boys were employed in watching the preliminary proceedings to a dog fight. In the village, to the left of the depot, a light here and there showed an early recognition of coming nightfall, punctuating with a faint, hopeful glimmer the rows of dark, low lying houses.

The woman, with her skirts held firmly

about her, stepped down upon the platform. On the other side of the narrow railing a man came out from the car adjoining and descended the steps. As he did so, the two people nearest the car came forward.

The man bearing the woman's valise followed behind her, until, near the center of the platform, she stopped; then, dropping the bag at her feet, he faced her. All about them were moving people; the train hissed impatiently upon its iron tracks, eager to be off. In the woman's eyes shone a new light—lit, perhaps, by the desire for activity after her hours of inertia. She breathed a little quickly through half-parted lips.

The man, after a backward glance at the still standing train, raised his hands to the level of her shoulder and spelt a few words. Something like a struggling smile twisted the corners of his mouth.

"Thank you for letting me talk to you. You have helped me."

She looked about her uncertainly.

Then cleaving the air about them, rising above all other sounds, rose a protesting cry.

"But I tell you it's absurd!" It was a man's voice, angry and fiercely argumentative, the voice of the other man who had got off the train. "I can't be detained here. I *won't* be detained here! I'm going on to Florida tonight. This is—this is preposterous. Why, it's—it's criminal!"

Answering immediately came another voice, apologetic and yet authoritative. "Very sorry, sir, but we must obey orders. It's being done at every station along the line. The New York police strongly suspect that the murderer is moving this way, and every man in any way answering to the description must stop off till we find out about him. Possibly it'll be only for the night."

From across the road a child, running swiftly, called out:

"Hi, Joey, come on! They're goin' to catch a man who killed somebody up in New York. Come on and see!"

The train, with a final explosion of steam, began to move slowly forward. The crowd about it fell away; in their

midst the angry passenger, growing sullen, ceased to expostulate.

Close to the woman's, the face of the man beside her seemed to grow dead. His eyes were fixed, staring, like the eyes of a man who sees death. He made no effort to get upon the receding train—seemed, in fact, not to notice that it was leaving. As if carved in stone, he stood, immovable.

When the group about the steps of the car scattered, the man who had answered the protest of the arrested passenger came out from its midst and made his way to where the silent woman stood. Upon the station porch the snarling of two dogs had ceased, peremptorily hushed. Overhead the parting shriek of the disappearing engine had shaken its echo to silence; the jangling, discordant chorus of eager voices grew fainter, half muffled by the increasing distance. The stillness, falling like a poultice to heal the blows of sound, grew; and it was into this stillness that the voice of the dumb woman, distinct and flexibly clear, probed and lingered, leaving behind it the impression of a singularly sweet vibration.

"How do you do, Mr. Jeffries?" she said, going forward. "Is there—do you know if my husband is here to meet me? I—we are so tired. I am so anxious to get home."

The man, removing his hat, stopped a few paces from her. "I haven't seen him or the carriage, Mrs. Haithcock. Guess he'll be here in a minute. Glad to see you back."

He hesitated, glancing past her to the man standing motionless beyond. "That gentleman is with you, isn't he?"

She nodded.

"Yes, I'm so—such a baby about traveling alone, you know," said the dumb woman. "He—he only came to—bring me, and is going back tonight. I wonder if that train to Washington is on time?"

"I'll find out for you, ma'am." He moved away. "And I'll see about your carriage, too, Mrs. Haithcock," he added.

The woman with the womanly face came swiftly back to the man. Her face, like his, was white; but her pallor was illumined, dazzling. Her eyes were shining blue stars. And her singularly sweet voice sounded into the silence again.

"The train to New York will be here in ten minutes," she said. "It will put you in New York again tomorrow morning. Don't look at anybody—or speak. Stand here—with your back to them."

Blindly he obeyed her. His eyes upon her face were wide, full of a pitiful, earnest questioning.

"You are an—an angel," he ejected hoarsely.

"No," she answered simply; "I am only a wife."

She seemed to separate him from the busy world, from the living, seeking world of men. About him on every side they moved, those whose words were coincident with their thoughts and deeds, who might live and—and yet never know the mystery of living—might never reach the naked souls of one another, touch them and then strive with human, impotent hands to cover up their nakedness. For him, with superhuman strength, she had thus striven; she who had met and ministered to the needs of another, who had spoken to another woman in her language, had now spoken to him in his, had with one stroke done away with the distance between them—with one act, wonderful, selfless, irrefutable, had placed herself upon the infinite plane of his loneliness.

About them the world moved. It was as if a million miles stretched between that world and theirs.

In the distance, against the darkening sky, the smoke of the northward coming train made white, ephemeral wreaths.



**EVEN** the most progressive woman is usually opposed to new wrinkles.

## MY HEART'S DESIRE

By Henry Herbert Knibbs

MY heart's desire is nothing great:  
Say just a little eight-by-eight  
Log cabin in the northern woods,  
Where I may wallow in my moods  
And wade around in solitudes  
And rubber boots,  
Free from excitement, noise and dudes;  
Yes, that just suits!

My heart's desire is nothing much:  
A little venison and such  
Sweet trout as cities ne'er afford,  
A little time to praise the Lord,  
My own peculiar way, for these  
Simplicities that ever please  
And never pall  
The heart, as in the birchen trees  
The thrushes call.

My heart's desire is nothing large:  
The open sky, the river marge,  
The soundless woods, the empty shore,  
Pine needles on the parlor floor,  
And hazy, lazy hours of life  
Just breathing air!  
(My word! What man asks less?) No strife,  
Peace everywhere.

My heart's desire? The waterfalls,  
The rushes where the grackle calls,  
The joy of negative delights,  
The melody of summer nights,  
And Gretchen's word  
Of practical suggestion, say,  
"You haven't washed your face today!"  
But faintly heard.

My heart's desire? Well, come to think,  
It's all too near Elysium's brink  
For humankind.  
One's heart, you know, is apt to change;  
Most anywhere, one can arrange  
His peace of mind.



# THE BRIDGE GAME

## AND HOW I BEAT IT TO A FINISH

By Owen Hatteras

I'M all through with bridge.

I didn't get through with it yesterday or the day before, though this is the first time it has seemed advisable to advertise my emancipation. A man who gives up a bad habit ought to wait at least two years before noising his manumission around. I have waited two years. I think I can say, with as much assurance as lowly mankind can say anything, that I am all through with bridge.

There will be a little group of four to six in the old cozy corner at the club this afternoon. Do I hanker to be there? Well—er—let's not inquire into any question so specific. We fellows that have emerged from the darkness of habit slavery ought to generalize as much as possible. We can easily frown upon alcohol in general; but pray do not serve Pommery '94 at dinner and expect us to decline. We put bridge behind us with virtuous outspread palm; but it is not well to get too near the green-topped tables.

The point is, I don't intend to allow myself to hanker to be over there at the club. I'm done with it.

I have no preachment against "occasional" bridge. And chronic bridge may be good for some people, just as some people seem to thrive on alcoholic stimulants. Bridge is a fascinating game—too fascinating. There is nothing inherently sinful in the fifty-two cards that constitute the deck. I would not go so far as to say that the trouble is with the players. I am shy of making blanket conclusions about it. But I know this: bridge is no good for me.

And I know something else, too: I can never in this world get back the things that bridge has cost me. Money? Not that, so much. But time, and opportunity, and intellectual refinements and pleasures, and the good society of worth-while people, and a thousand other good things. Not forgetting, either, my patience, and my good nature (at times), and sometimes even my self-respect.

I am not going to prescribe for anybody else. I know perfectly well the consummate importance of the personal equation. But there are in the civilized world some millions of people who play bridge, or think they play bridge, or wish they could. They may be interested—some of them—to hear how I beat the bridge game. Some day they might want to do the same themselves; and it would be a considerable help to feel certain that it had been done before, and therefore could be done again.

I had a hard fight, in the business world, for twenty-five years. There was no time for play; no time even for necessary exercise and recreation, except that sometimes I was able to get out on the links on Sunday and worry the ball around a bit. I worked unremittingly and unquestioningly; and when the trust bought out my interests, I was probably much nearer the ragged edge, physically and nervously, than I knew. I mention this point at some length because such men, suddenly released from the toils of modern business, are often willing victims to the bridge habit.

There is a soothing quality in the slipping of smooth cards, and lolling in quiet corners, and the more or less mechanical type of thinking that goes with all card games.

Well, at first I was keen for travel. Finding myself with more real coin of the realm than I had ever dreamed of possessing, and nothing to do, I could indulge myself in this innocent pastime. I was abroad nearly two years. I lived in Rome two months, went up the Nile, saw the cherry blossoms in bloom in Japan; and I have only to close my eyes to picture the Taj Mahal by moonlight. And after these, the deluge!

After these, bridge.

I had always wondered a good deal about this game of bridge. With some envy I used to hear, at my hastily snatched luncheons, business associates talking about "leaving the office early, to have a few rubbers at the club." In the old days I had no more time for bridge than for aviation. But when I returned from abroad, rather aimless and eager for diversions, I was ripe for bridge. In fact, I was probably carrying the bridge bacilli in my blood at the time, though conditions were not yet favorable for their development. One afternoon an old friend called me on the telephone to say that I had been elected a member of the Michigan Avenue Bridge Club. The news was gratifying. It meant something new to do. The bacilli jumped for joy.

Though I knew only two members of the club, it was not long before I was being called by my given name in the most clubby manner possible. I never did have much luck in remembering names when introduced to a crowd; and as all the members seemed to use their given names without reserve, I found myself being called Owen, and calling others George, Billy, Frank, or whatever the case might be.

With a few exceptions, I suppose those fellows at the bridge club were up to the average in social graces and good will, and what may be called simply common decency. And these exceptions may not have been so bad as they seemed. A peculiar thing about bridge slavery is

that it tremendously accentuates any natural propensity of a man or woman. That is, a person inclined to be acrimonious is likely to develop into a common scold; and a greedy man or woman will become a devouring monster.

As in all whist clubs, we had our share of amusing and interesting "characters." There was the man (a lawyer, in this instance) who always fell a victim to the impulse to overbid his hand. A hand that would have been worth a spade to a careful player would throw this lawyer into an enthusiasm for no-trumps. There was a retired manufacturer who wanted to play every hand, so that his partner had little to do but try to preserve his good nature. There was the proverbial lucky duffer whose hand grew aces and kings like radishes in a market garden; who never dared bid the full strength of his hand; and whose partners, depending upon his usual run of luck, would sometimes overbid to the extent of going down for several hundred points. And, naturally, there were one or two players, hopelessly bad, though fearfully earnest, who generally managed to make a blunder at the crucial moment in the rubber—enough for the opposition to go game.

This was all great fun. I believe I had a hallucination, for a while, that I was merely a student of human nature; not a devotee of bridge. I suppose most of the players thought the same thing at the beginning. I did not closely observe the fact that I was showing up regularly at the club at three in the afternoon and playing steadily until seven, and that I was frequently coming back in the evening for a long session. These night games are the killing kind; the species that get you home in time for breakfast.

Before long I was in the condition where I used to go over to the club without thinking about it at all. It was second nature. My feet used to take me over without any instructions.

There were, of course, certain men with whom I preferred to play, but as no set games were allowed and any member had the privilege of cutting into a table, a quick glance around on entering the

card room determined my table. If there was a poor player at this table, it straightway became my endeavor to avoid him as a partner. This was not difficult if new cards were used, for when a new deck is spread out it is easy to pick the low cards, the breaks in the spread betraying them. To be a little dilatory in cutting, taking either what I thought was a low card, or the one next to it, which ordinarily is higher, helped me often to avoid objectionables. An edifying spirit, you think? Remember, we are not talking of good fellowship, but bridge.

If I had been really there to study human nature (but I wasn't), I might have observed some unlovely developments in the conduct of the games. The desire to win, which is a timid, harmless desire in the beginning, is capable of becoming a cruel driving power that leads men and women to unseemly length and practices. As I look back on it there was a lot of talk bandied about at the club that was only a refined version of insult and vituperation. It was not such overt conversation as would earn a man a challenge to fight it out behind the house; it was a meaner sort of brabbling—a whiny, peevish, splenetic line of talk, carrying such points as these:

"If you had only returned a club instead of a diamond—but of course you didn't know—" (the tone implying that you ought to have known if you had any sense in your head)

"Why did you let that ace go to sleep?"

"Owen, when will you ever learn to play the game?"

There is this much about bridge, certainly: Its inevitable partnership arrangement is calculated to provoke difficulties. In poker a man wins for himself and loses his own money; but in bridge, when you blunder, the cost is not alone your own. And if there is any piece of human hypocrisy quite so transparent and disgusting as the attempt of a man to look unconcerned as his duffer-partner loses both their moneys, I should like to be informed what it is!

Another bit of bridge cant is the oft-

heard statement, "Of course the small stakes are no object, except just to give the game a little zest." It is true that when the stakes are small there is no chance of winning or losing a fortune; and it is also true that even when the stakes are large it does not worry some folks very much; but if you wish to get an idea of how utterly false is the claim that "the stakes are no object," you want to see the vulture-like attention which many bridge players give to the bookkeeping end. Just be so careless, sometime, as to score a hundred points for yourself instead of your opponents, and observe *not* the protest that follows, but the *tone* and *manner* of the protest.

Not only this, but it must be remembered that one acquisitive, businesslike bridge player in a club will give more or less of his spirit to the whole club. We had a man in our club who, whatever his pretensions were, was not in the game entirely for his health. I do not mean to imply that he played dishonestly. But he was certainly mercenary; and the fact that he was a good player, and had been able to lay up a couple thousand dollars a year from his successes, made him extremely critical of an unskilled partner. He hated to lose the game for the game's sake; but more he hated to lose his money.

It is not the highest imaginable pleasure to play with a man of this type. On one occasion, having drawn him for a partner, I neglected to count the pips carefully, so that a perfectly good seven-spot remained unused in my hand; and, worse luck, this oversight of mine gave the rubber to our adversaries. Mr. Money Grabber proceeded to shed his displeasure in a loud voice. "That stupid play of yours threw the rubber!" he said.

There was a moment of strained silence. Then I replied, in a voice calculated to be equally penetrating: "Yes, Mr. Hicks, it was an error. I'll admit you play this game better than I; but there are a dozen more important things in life that I can do better than you."

A snicker went through the room, and Mr. Hicks retreated with dissatisfied rumblings that might have been ac-

cepted for either apologies or threats. Of course I was sorry the words had escaped me. It awoke me, momentarily, to the fact that we were taking bridge altogether too seriously; or, more truly, that bridge was getting the upper hand of us. These bursts of anger were too frequent. There was always the expected apology next day; but whereas the rebuke had been administered in full company, in an unrestrained voice, the apology was usually made in a placid *vis-à-vis*, in tones meant only for the injured one.

Bridge has a way of dulling sensibilities. This must be so. How else would men and women, quick to take offense and slow to be appeased in social and business life, calmly submit to bullying and polite scourging during a game of bridge? I confess that I have taken and given at the bridge table in a shameful and shameless manner—counting it “part of the game.” But one day something happened that penetrated my thickened epidermis in no uncertain way. It not only stung, but it woke me.

I was playing with a man I knew merely as Henry. Henry was one of the players of whom I have spoken above—willing to win every game; impatient of any mistakes save his own. The hand which brought on the climax was not so very unusual; nor was the play anything but ordinary; yet I am going to give the game as it proceeded so that the reader may judge of what a mountainous aspect molehills appear to the bridge slave.

The dealer bid one heart, having six to the king, queen, ten; the king of spades; three small diamonds, and three clubs to the ace.

I had the ace of hearts, five spades to the jack, ten, nine, three clubs to the king, queen, and four diamonds to the ten. I bid four spades, indicating five spades, without tops, and an outside ace.

The third hand, having a set-up suit of six diamonds headed by the ace, king, queen, three hearts to the jack, and three small clubs, with a singleton in spades, bid two diamonds.

The fourth hand, with six spades to

the ace, queen, no diamonds, three small hearts, and four clubs, headed by the jack, bid two royals.

The dealer then switched to three diamonds, and I bid three royals. Third hand, having shown diamonds, bid four hearts.

The fourth hand and dealer passed, and I went to four royals. The third hand made it five hearts, which I doubled.

I led with a spade, feeling sure that my partner had the ace. He did have the ace, but by accident or otherwise, he pulled the wrong card, the queen, which was taken by the dealer's lone king. Then the dealer played his king of hearts, drawing my ace. I felt confident that we were entitled to two tricks in clubs and led the king, placing the ace in my partner's hand; but this trick was taken by the dealer, who thereupon took out the trumps, and discarding his losing clubs on the dummy's diamonds, made a little slam.

Immediately the last trick had been taken, an expression of flushed displeasure took possession of my partner's face, and in that crushing manner which bridge players perfect for such happy occasions, he said: “When any headwork is required, you're not in it, are you, Owen? If you had played a diamond instead of that club! With six in dummy and four in your own hand, you might have known that I didn't have any.”

It seemed so utterly barefaced and superfluous—in view of the fact that if he had taken the trick in spades, led up to weakness in dummy by leading the jack of clubs, we should have taken four tricks and got two hundred—that I lost patience, and returned the compliment of abuse.

But Henry was one of those players that are never, never guilty of bad play, though they may make slips of the fingers. “That was a mistake,” he confessed. “But *you* didn't play the game, you know.”

When I went home that evening, I had a rush of realization to the head. Something was rankling within me; and it wasn't the mere unpleasant episode of



the afternoon. It was a vague feeling that I had been making a chump of myself right along; that a man who places himself in such abject subjugation to a deck of cards deserved all the excoriation of disappointed partners that he may get. At dinner I found myself actually blushing at the recollection of the afternoon's encounter. I decided to stay at home that evening and read.

But reading is greatly a matter of habit, like playing bridge. I had the habit of one, and had not the habit of the other. There was a craving in my consciousness, much akin to the physical craving of the cocaine victim. I was restless; found it impossible to fix my attention; and finally I gave up the job and permitted my feet to escort me down to the club.

On the very threshold of the club, I had an idea—possibly the best single idea that had accosted me in years. I would go into the club, but I wouldn't play. I would watch others play. Of course this was a difficult plan to carry out. The idea of a chronic bridge being content to watch the play of others was something supra-mundane. But I pleaded a headache, or some other mild falsehood, and watched a game in the old cozy corner.

At first I was too engrossed in the play of the hand before me to make any extra-game observations; but at the end of the hand, when the acid words, "You might have known better than to return that heart—" were wafted toward me, I was hit between the eyes. The thought came to me quickly: "*It might have been you, Owen, getting that tongue-lashing!*"

From that moment I began to perceive things about the bridge game that, as a player, had never occurred to me. It was the old idea of seeing ourselves as others see us. The first thing that was impressed on me was that the game was very unlike a game; that it was more like a matter of business, or a tremendous *coup d'état*, in which loss was an unspeakable contingency. I saw, in the eyes of the players, certain of the unloveliest of human attitudes; cunning and rapacity foremost. To be sure, there was no bloodshed, and no bank-

ruptcy. But I could not help thinking: "What a prodigious amount of energy is being spent here—and for what?"

And a further idea came: "These gentlemen are here assembled, ostensibly, for a little recreation. What sort of recreation is this—which makes a man follow the course of fifty-two cards with lynx-like eyes, at the same time overworking his brain to contrive the upset of two eager adversaries!"

I went home and thought about it; thought about it at the expense of sleep, until the milk carts began to rattle on the asphalt. Of one thing I felt certain: I was done with bridge.

Some bridge players will probably drop my autobiographical sketch at this point and adjourn to their club. Very well. But there must be a large number of players who seriously wonder now and then whether their time might not be taken up with something of larger cosmic possibilities. I ask such to follow me a little farther.

Being, as I thought, done with the bridge game, and being also of a rather businesslike and practical turn of mind, the next thing in my mind was to cast a sort of trial balance and find out just where I stood; also, what I was going to do.

I got to thinking about the cost of bridge. I suppose bridge has cost me a considerable amount of money; not so much in the stakes lost, but in the "sundries" and "incidentals." But I could afford the money, so this phase of the cost is not important. Yet I happen to know that there are many men and women losing at bridge who really cannot afford to lose what they lose. Who actually pays these losses is a matter of speculation. It may be the tailor and the grocer.

There is a bigger aspect of the cost of bridge than the merely financial one, and I am going to touch on some of the details as I know them from my own experience. When I was at the height of my enthusiasm for the game, I never had time to do anything else. I can recall with some grim amusement that

the cuffs of my shirts used to get frayed for the one bare reason that I never could find time to go to my shirtmaker's and be measured for more shirts. I recall that I needed, from time to time, new clothes; but it was a long distance to the tailor's and a short distance to the bridge table. I was always getting ready to go to see my tailor, and never quite arriving at his establishment; but I never had the slightest difficulty in finding time to play a few rubbers.

Years before, when I was in the toils of business, I had made up my mind to do a lot of reading when the leisure came for it. I envied, with all my heart and soul, those of my friends who had the necessary energy left at night to sit down at home with a cigar and a good book. "Some day I will do that," I thought. But about the only regular reading I did while in the grip of the bridge bacilli was in books that concerned the mastery of the intricacies of the game.

For the simple truth is that bridge, or any other card game that requires close application, is almost entirely fatal to thought. But bridge takes thought, you say? Oh, certainly; of a kind. But the mental activity needed to direct the disposal of thirteen cards where they will do you and your partner the maximum good is a very limited and narrow channel of thought, from my point of view. The principal thing that can be said in favor of card games, anyway, is that they give a relaxation from ordinary mental activity. To this end they are fine. But the bridge slave, finding bridge much easier than thinking, constantly follows this line of least resistance. This was my case exactly.

I have always been an ardent champion of home life. I suppose that during the period of my bridge mania I imagined myself to be just as powerful an exponent of the joys of the family circle as ever; but the fact was that I spent mighty little time at home. I had a good will in the matter, but no time. Any little scheme that occurred to me, as to taking the family to the theater, or for a weekend, or lecture, could be knocked out of my head by the receipt

of a telephone message that "we are looking for you this afternoon at the club."

Again, bridge is one of the very poorest of indoor sports, when the physical well-being is considered. Without noticing it, as my eagerness for the card table waxed my health waned. I put on altogether too much weight, and took off altogether too much color; that is, natural color. I have never been much of a consumer of alcohol, but the little that I consumed was much too much; and the lot that others consumed at my expense was also considerably too considerable. The most natural thing to do when you sit down for a rubber is to light a cigar; and the next most natural thing to do is to light another cigar when that one is consumed; and in the course of an afternoon you will likely have converted a number of cigars to white ash at the expense of your nervous system. The atmosphere is stale, in spite of the most approved ventilation appliances.

Since I beat the bridge game "to a finish," I have dropped some of that jowl, and some of that girth, and some of that ponderous step that was beginning to make a human joke of me. Instead of a dull, slightly inflamed eye, there is a clearness; and I did not get that clearness from the bridge table. I am getting in some of the exercise—walking, riding, golf—that I used to talk about and wish I could do if I could only spare the time from the contemplation of a fistful of cards.

But the most vicious assault that bridge made upon me, in those years that are painful to reconstruct, was the smallness of mind that was gradually forced upon me. A "smallness of mind" I call it; you may call it what you please; but it shows itself in a limited outlook, a puerile and fading discourse and a volume of cheap talk and reminiscences. Those reminiscences! The Lord forgive us! There may be merit and human interest in such reminiscences as Napoleon's of Austerlitz, and Lee's of the Wilderness battles; but what possible virtue can be found in a bridge fiend's ten-minute recitation on how he played

that last hand in the game when So-and-So was his partner, when it was game-all, and he held six small spades, etc., etc.? Is there anything in the universe more piffing than this sort of air-jamming? And yet is it not what you are hearing, you accomplished bridger, about six or seven days in the week!

Why, long after a game was over and relegated to the limbo of wasted effort, I myself have sat on a leather chair and held a "post-mortem" as to the rightness or wrongness of the way I played a certain hand. I blush to think of it. *Peccavi!*

I have mentioned the discourteous remarks that almost inevitably are bandied back and forth. This is bad enough, within the confines of the four walls that inclose a game of bridge; but it is worse when, as so often happens, the player gets into the habit of taking the same conversational strain out into the world with him. The subconscious mind is alert to just such impressions as these, and does not see why, if its owner can bullyrag a man at a game of bridge, he should not have the same permission in other occupations. I speak only for myself, of course; but I have had to unlearn a lot of queer manners since I last sat in at bridge.

The fellows I constantly met at the club were a rather good lot; I have not a word to say against them. What made them decidedly bad medicine, when taken in large doses almost every day in the week, was that they were all, like myself, victims to the bridge habit. There was nothing to be gained through associating with them but a further infection with the same disease I already had. They were not reading, they were not exercising; and their range of mental activity was as limited as my own had become.

I shouldn't want to leave anyone with the idea that it was an easy matter for me to beat the bridge game. It wasn't. It was an awfully complicated and serious undertaking. I had been slowly unfitting myself for the enjoyment of any other diversion, and my hankering for the slippery cards was at times so great that I took a train for nowhere in particular, to visit nobody at all, just to get out of the range of the tentacles of that club of mine.

I had good fortune in my family. There, at least, was a perpetual excuse for doing something else; for driving, for theaters, for reading in the evening. Possibly they would not feel flattered at home if they knew how many times they have been used as the instrument of fighting the "bridge evil." But these days I have time to improve my mind, and time to improve the condition of my body.

I have a natural dread of being suspected of a Pharisaical attitude. Those who can play bridge "not to excess" are engaged in an altogether harmless pastime. The trouble is, it seems to me, there are too few that can play without going to excess. I know that I couldn't.

I don't for a minute believe that it would do me any immediate harm to sit down this evening to a few rubbers, in good company. I concede it might brisk me up a little, like any newish diversion. But will I do it? I guess not. *Never again*; and I say it with upstretched hand, palm virtuously outward.

I have a good book at home waiting for me, and I have a wife who has the legal and moral right to a few minutes of my time; and when I get into that frame of mind again where the Ace of Clubs assumed a personality worth discussing for ten minutes, you may call in the nearest alienist!



**T**HOUGH hearts are trumps in love, a setback is often saved by playing through strength in diamonds.

# THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY

By Achmed Abdullah

**N**ASRULLAH AHMED, the Afghan, drew himself up to the full height of his eleven years. Then he addressed once more the patient bazaar scribe, throwing him a badly chipped coin.

"Thou takest advantage of me because I am but a child. Not a single anna would I give thee if I were grown up, but I would give thee many kicks all over thy fat body in payment of the letter which I shall now dictate to thee."

The Hindoo looked up and replied:

"Child of strife, thou hadst better keep a civil tongue, for there is justice in the town of Kabool."

Nasrullah Ahmed looked imperturbably at the squatting scribe.

"Thou art right; there is justice in Kabool—justice for Moslem and the son of Moslem, but not for the filth-eating Kaffirs. And now take care to write exactly as I tell thee:

"In the name of the Incomparable Messenger Mohammed, on whom peace and a thousand benedictions. May this letter be safely delivered into the hands of Abdullah Shujah, sepoy sahib in the regiment of the Afreedi Guides, in the service of the British Raj. My father, I write thee this letter to tell thee that the mother of thy sons, and I, thy first born, are sorely in need of rupees. Verily there is nothing in the house, no salt, no oil, no tamarinds, no onions and no garlic. I have just given our last coin to the unbelieving Hindoo pig who is writing this letter for me, and to whom I shall give many and grievous blows when thou art dead, O my Father, and I grown up and the head of the family."

Then Nasrullah Ahmed went back to the house of his mother and returned to his pastime of kneading lumps of mud, and making them represent the various wares in a bazaar. After a while he walked slowly up to the house, and said with dignity:

"Mother, today I have made a resolution. I have done forever with playthings. Today I am grown up, and soon I shall be the head of the family."

But the mother laughed softly and said: "Wait till thy father returns from the war. Perhaps he will make thee a general sahib."

Two weeks passed, and the mother of Abdullah Shujah's sons waited anxiously for a letter from her master.

One day Nasrullah Ahmed saw the postman's official turban appear on the horizon and, running toward him, he shouted: "Quick, O thou my brother, give me the letter which comes from my father."

But when the mother opened the little package she found no letter, but only a money order on the bank of Ramavalla Singh in Peshawur for seventeen rupees and seven annas, balance of pay and proceeds of sale of clothing and personal effects of deceased sepoy Abdullah Shujah, in the regiment of the Afreedi Guides.

The woman burst out into an abandonment of weeping, repeating over and over again: "He is dead, the master of my heart. He is dead."

But Nasrullah Ahmed looked on impassively. Then he said:

"It is the will of Allah. Now I am the head of the family—and now I shall go to the bazaar and kick that fat Hindoo pig."



## "TO THE VICTORS—"

By Isabel Paterson

POPE said it first, and one of the James brothers—no, not Jesse, another one—explained it and modified it. And then Charlie Carroll and his girl put it into practice. I saw them do it, and I wish I could ask the two first named if that was what they really meant. I think I am talking about a standard of ethics and morality, but I am not quite sure of anything lately. The modern philosopher, I believe, called it Pragmatism, changing the "whatever is, is right," into "whatever will work effectively, is good." It all sounded very comfortable to me, even conservative, as a theory. I was kind to it, I adopted it, and it turned and rent me. Because it *did* work; and nothing is more disconcerting than a theory that works.

I do not really think, however, that those two young people were much concerned with testing philosophies in what they did. I put Charlie first in speaking of them, because I knew him first; he would undoubtedly have reversed the order. Also, I meant no disrespect to her by my choice of phrase; I simply thought of her so the first time I ever saw them together.

My acquaintance with Charlie dated back to the times when I was paying court to his Aunt Lavinia. Lavinia married a better man than I, who bore me no malice. So, at fifty, I was a sort of supernumerary uncle to Charlie, as well as his family's lawyer. By that time his parents had been dead a good many years; Lavinia imagined she stood in the place of his mother because she had selected his prep. school for him and was always ready to give him good advice; and Charlie himself was thirty years old,

a fact both Lavinia and myself, I fear, hardly appreciated.

Lavinia did, to the extent of discovering a possible wife for him every few months, but it did not save Charlie from being treated by her in conversation as a cross between an idiot and an infant. Such treatment does not usually lead to confidential relations. Charlie was nice to the girls of his aunt's choice when cornered, but he grew increasingly difficult to corner, and meantime lived his own life, rather largely and extensively, and quite outside his aunt's range of vision.

As for me, I tried to watch him, mostly to keep an interest in life. I think he felt that, for he talked to me on an equality when we met, a rare favor from youth to age.

So I confess I missed him when he suddenly dropped from sight for a matter of several months. I knew he was in town, too, and occasionally railed at his selfishness, but I have learned better than to go searching for a lost friendship.

Lavinia, however, was by no means so easily laid aside. She sent for me, and ordered me to find Charlie.

She gave me a plausible excuse for my search, in the shape of some business matters on which she wished to consult him, and I own I felt some pleasure in the commission. The last I had heard of him, he had been endeavoring to break his neck in an aeroplane out on Long Island, but I could learn nothing of him at the field, and turned to his favorite club. There they gave me a forwarding address for his mail. I might have telephoned a warning, I suppose, but I told myself fatuously that he

wouldn't mind me dropping in on him unexpectedly, and there were some papers for him to look over. So no more than half an hour later I was ringing the doorbell of one of the ten thousand or so half-portion apartments wedged between Fiftieth Street and Harlem. It had just occurred to me, as a rather humorous touch, that I had found the lost one no more than twenty blocks from Lavinia's own handsome house near Riverside Drive, when the door opened.

I thought I must have made a mistake after all. There was a girl framed in the doorway, a trim little person in a blue cotton dress that shaded well with her ingenuous blue eyes, and a bright bandanna handkerchief concealing her hair. She had a duster in her hand and a look of inquiry on her face. She told me afterward that she took me for a book agent. You see, they were not exactly expecting friends to call.

"I beg your pardon," I managed to say. "I was looking for—I thought this was Mr. Carroll's apartment."

"It is," answered the girl. My mind instantly seized and as instantly rejected the theory that she was a maid who looked after the place; then it turned upside down and floundered, while she continued: "But he isn't in just now. Do you wish to leave any message?"

"Why, I—I wanted to see him," I said lamely. "When does he come in? Are you—"

"I'm his sister," said the little lady quite calmly. "He will probably be back soon, and if you want to leave a 'phone number—"

I was floored. Charlie was an only child, unless his parents had led a double life. I seized on a last straw.

"It's Mr. Charles Burnley Carroll I'm looking for," I said desperately.

"Yes," she said. "But he isn't in—why, there he is now!" She smiled over my shoulder, and I think raised herself on tiptoe to do it, although I am not a very tall man.

And there he was: Charlie, looking rather younger, and yet curiously more mature than when I had seen him last; Charlie, with his arms full of bundles,

and an answering smile on his face for the girl in the doorway. Recognition of me wiped out the smile, like a wet sponge going over a slate; he nodded gravely and went past me to put his bundles on the table. Then he turned and faced me, squaring his shoulders like a fighter about to step into the ring.

We did not lose any time in preliminaries. My face asked everything, and his and hers, in a glance that passed between them, answered all. We stood and looked, and I managed to speak first.

"Won't you introduce me?"

He did, too, naming her as Mrs. Ashburton. I think she read something, perhaps only a desire to understand, perhaps sympathy, in my manner, and her mouth twitched upward at the corners again. I bowed to her, Charlie still watching me as if he were ready to kill me if I made the slightest false move, but I took my life in my hands.

"Tell me about it, old man. It's my business to mind other people's affairs," I said, in as tactful a tone as I could manage.

It served. I do not quite remember how they told it, but I got the story quite clear in its essentials. And the essentials were, simply, that they had met for the first time a few months before, walked into each other's arms, and stayed there.

The flat was incidental and inevitable. They asked me to stay to dinner, and I accepted as if it were my only chance of a meal in all New York. They had two whole rooms and a bath, so far as I could perceive. Dinner was prepared on a gas stove which lurked surreptitiously behind the front door. When the door was opened, Maisie Ashburton explained gravely, the kitchen wasn't there, but otherwise the lurking place must be considered as a real kitchen. Charlie helped with the dinner, quite as a matter of course, and I may say that I enjoyed it. They drank out of the same cup when coffee was served; it seemed I had to be given the other cup. After dinner, while Maisie Ashburton washed the dishes in the handbasin, I looked again at the preposterous apartment, with its appalling furniture of imi-

tation oak and near-leather, its inevitable red carpet and fraudulent fireplace, and then I looked at the two who lived in it, and I was envious.

"But what are you going to do?" I asked Charlie, none the less.

"Get married," he responded promptly.

"Why aren't you married now?" I persisted.

Maisie looked at me with a funny little lift of her eyebrows; I had not thought she was listening. "I've got a husband, somewhere or other," she said. "Got to find him, and get a divorce."

"Suppose he finds *you*?" I suggested. It was in my mind that they were breaking the law of the land as well as a few of the commandments, to say nothing of all the conventions. They must be aware of that.

"He won't," she said, somewhat meditatively. "But if he does—it will save me some trouble."

Save her trouble! I took half an hour to show her, in a roundabout manner, the risks she ran, and she shrugged an indifferent shoulder and said: "I know, but he won't bother me. He owes me several divorces." So I went away and left them, wondering how on earth I should face Lavinia's soul-searching gaze and terrible questions. I have never been able to lie well to a woman; that requires a special genius.

I had a feeling that the two I left behind kissed each other the moment the door closed after me. And I remembered, too late, that I had gone with my mission unfulfilled.

It was an excellent excuse for going back. I fear I overworked it somewhat in the month following, and got to know Maisie quite well. She said she was glad to have me come, because Charlie did not mind and his daily absences meant a good many lonely intervals for her.

"I can hardly send my address to my friends," she said whimsically. "I'm as badly off as the man without a country; I'm the girl with no address. Perhaps soon—"

The curiosity which had devoured my very soul urged a question. "But

why," I asked, "if you meant to get a divorce and marry—" My eyes roamed around the poor little flat.

She interpreted my thoughts and sighed.

"Haven't you ever loved anybody?" she said.

Lavinia came to my mind. "I thought I did once," I confessed.

"Do you think, then, that it's something you can put on a shelf and go get it when you want it?" She dropped her lids and examined the corner of her apron carefully. "About the only thing I owe my husband is some—some knowledge of men. I—I believe—" She got up and walked about restlessly, turning her shoulder to me while she spoke. "It seems to me it's a thing so delicately balanced between body and soul that you can't juggle with it long without an upset that may leave something irremediably broken. Of the two chances, I'd rather take this one. It's not a thing to bargain and drive terms with. Women have to, I suppose. But"—she threw back her head and her square chin set arrogantly—"I don't have to. Do I want a man who will only marry me because he can't get me any other way?"

There was something foolhardily fine about it, like a man who goes into battle despising odds, casting aside his shield. Some feeling in me, which I had thought dead and which her words showed to me only broken and spoiled, stirred. If I stood as a representative of the world at large, she had faced me down. And the image of Charlie seemed to stand back of her, his manhood ready to defend her womanhood. It was strange, but while she spoke he seemed to be in the room. "Well," I said only, "if you ever think you need me, send for me."

Two days later she did send for me. I went, feeling rather like a broken reed after an interview with Lavinia, who had failed to find satisfaction in my reports of the prodigal, and had ferreted out something for herself, following my own simple course. She was morally, if not materially, certain that some entanglement existed. She had put me in the dock as an accomplice, and had ended by giving me peremptory orders to

bring back the errant Charlie footloose and fancy free. If I temporized, however, it was not so much on my own account as because Lavinia had the fatal address. I wanted time to warn the defiant pair. Occupied thus with one possible *contretemps*, I walked into another.

It struck me head on. If I was a trifle surprised to find Maisie had a caller, still not a remote inkling of the distressing truth occurred to me until Maisie eloquently introduced to me, with two words, the sulky, handsome young man who stood by the table rolling a cigarette.

"My husband," she said.

The atmosphere felt like that of the hour preceding a summer storm, with Ashburton as a gathering cloud and Maisie an imminent flash of lightning. What words we had during the interview were quiet enough, but tense with repression. I gathered that Ashburton had found Maisie through the chuckle-headed lawyer to whom she had confided her affairs in the West. Ashburton's mother and father had put on some mild pressure to induce him to patch up and remodel his domestic affairs, offering certain advantages in consideration. They had never been blinded by parental affection as to the rights and wrongs of the case. They wanted him to settle down. Perhaps he wanted to settle down himself. And, as he admitted unthinkingly, no one else would let him down so easy as Maisie. He watched her constantly out of the corner of his eye, his expression a compound of resentful anger, a flicker of humor and a certain apprehension.

"It's too late," she said. "You know why. And if I could, I wouldn't go back on what I've done. Will you return West and get a divorce from me for desertion? That would be easy—"

"For you?" he asked sulkily. "Why should I?"

"Oh, I don't know," she answered with dangerous mildness, for her eyes were hard and bright. "Why should I have let you out of your bargain so easily when you found it inconvenient? Did I ask you for anything then? Did I try to throw mud at you in the courts?"

I thought you might still like to keep your own affairs to yourself, as I do. Of course if you won't—"

"What will you do?" He leaned across the table, still a little apprehensive, but more curious. She dropped her chin on her hand, her face expressionless, rather cruel perhaps, her eyes dark and brooding.

"I don't know," she said slowly, as if speaking to herself. "I don't know. Something, I suppose . . ."

The tension yielded suddenly; ten minutes later Ashburton had gone, still sulky, looking rather dazed and surprised at himself.

"He'll do it," said Maisie, leaning back wearily in the chair, looking of a sudden exceedingly small and forlorn. "That fool of a lawyer can keep him up to it now. Go away, please, I want to cry."

That was how I happened to overtake Ashburton, waiting on the corner for a car. Curiosity impelled me to ride with him, and I found him more communicative than in Maisie's presence. He seemed to be still wondering to himself at his course of action, and all he could say in explanation was a commentary upon her "I don't know!"

"That's it," he said: "I didn't know either. She's a woman one can't—can't foresee. She might do just anything, but it would never be what you'd look for. And what can you expect of a woman who never sheds a tear?"

So she had not cared enough for him even to show him her tears!

"But I'd like to have smashed that other chap," Ashburton went on, still half to himself.

"Yes?" I returned inquiringly, and added: "I think he's bigger than you. Anyway, it isn't any use for men to fight over women now. The woman probably goes to the beaten one just to show she will do as she pleases. Or she may desert both for a third man." So, feeling very sapient, I left him, still glooming and wondering, running his hand through his thick hair.

For the day Charlie escaped me, got home—I thought of it as "home" for him also—unwarned. And next morn-



ing it was too late. Lavinia had caught him. She played her hand well, too: stated her suspicions as facts, and he blundered into a confirmation. She gave him an ultimatum concerning financial matters, and got a point blank refusal from him. I believe he thought that would end the matter. He came to me raging, more for someone to pour out his troubles to than anything else.

Lavinia came not an hour later, also raging, but cold. She had failed with Charlie, but would not acknowledge defeat. She bade me wait on her the next morning. Thankful for even a few hours' respite, I did so.

She had me then; she was going to see Maisie, and I could not escape nor bend her purpose. I felt lost and hopeless and traitorous to both sides. There was nothing for it but to accompany her, and continue to act as a buffer. The thought of Maisie transfixed by Lavinia's icy, lorgnetted stare made me writhe.

I might have spared my pains. If Maisie was surprised, she masked it with politeness; Lavinia's barbed glances were turned aside from the shield of Maisie's indifference to her and all that she represented. Lavinia towered, refusing a chair; Maisie merely drooped into one herself with a murmured: "No? I'm afraid you'll be tired. I am, already. Please sit. And what can I do for you?"

A gasp of indignation preluded Lavinia's next speech. Then she carefully insulted her opponent with a veiled threat and a naked offer of compensation. The same threat had already proven ineffective against Charlie, but Lavinia was tenacious.

"Cut off his allowance?" murmured Maisie. "But, you see, he's working anyway, and we live on his salary. It might even be good for him." Lavinia's jeweled lorgnette quivered in her thin old hand; her arched nose seemed suddenly menacing, predatory.

"Good for him? If you think it is good for any man to lose his fortune, his friends, his social standing, to become virtually an outcast, your—affection for him must be of a strange quality. You'd rather ruin him than lose him, all

to feed your vanity! And how long do you think he'll remain satisfied? What can you give him in return?"

A fine line drew between Maisie's brows, in spite of her calmness. "Give him? Nothing, I suppose. It is rather hard to have nothing to give when one cares. If I had as much to give him as you appear to have, however, I do not believe I would want to exact so much in return. Do you like the idea of buying a man?" Lavinia was ghastly; there was pain mixed with her rage. But there was no sign of giving in. Maisie went on, her voice taking on a monotonous, dulled tone. "Just what do you mean by his losing his fortune?"

Lavinia looked at me, her eyes glittering with the hope of triumph. "You explain to this—young lady," she commanded.

I did. Charlie had a reversionary right to what his mother had held, with Lavinia, of their mother's fortune. Part of the income of it she had given him, out of justice masquerading as generosity, and taken much credit to herself therefor. I was not too careful to keep that implication out of my recital of the facts. But none of it could he claim legally until her death.

Something in the scene I had been forced to take part in sickened me; I felt as bitter and old as Lavinia looked. To see her, having squeezed life dry herself, trying to devour the freshness of another's youth, called to that cheated something in me which had been my own youth until it cried aloud in revolt. I was so afraid she might win!

Maisie listened and was very still. And at last: "It seems—a lot," she commented finally.

"Then you'll give him up?" It was almost a cry of triumph from Lavinia, leaning across the table, her hands closing clutchingly. "You know, I don't want you to suffer; I'm willing to arrange—"

Maisie stood up, her face wicked in its concentrated contempt. "You need not try," she said, "because," and she swept the older woman from head to foot with one look, "you haven't a thing in the world that I want. Do you mind

leaving me now? I will let you know—tomorrow."

We went out in a thick silence, Maisie still standing, white-faced, gazing at nothing. Lavinia put her hand on my arm, and I could feel her tremble. She wanted words for the emotions that surged in her, and could only mutter: "Ingratitude! Ingratitude—and insolence! To speak to me like that!" I called a taxi, put her in it, and walked home. Mentally I was deciding on a trip to the country the next day, or perhaps to Europe.

The next day I wished I had hastened my departure. It is not good to look at a man's naked heart, and Charlie came to me with his in his eyes, and a tale on his tongue that he could hardly believe himself. It was told in three words, and then he stood waiting, as if for me to contradict him, holding out a slip of paper to me.

Maisie had gone!

It was as if he had said: "The sun has gone out. I am dying!" And not easily, but hard, very hard. She had gone! Why? And above all, where? Her letter said only that it seemed she was costing him too dearly; it was too much for her to accept. She was doing what seemed to be the only fair thing. He must not worry; she would be all right. That was all.

And he must not worry! He put his head on his arms and cursed and choked.

To give a man a drink of brandy for a broken heart may seem inadequate and banal, but it was all I could do. "Won't do any good," he said huskily. "I can't get drunk. Anyway, I've got to find her." He drank it finally, and dropped the glass with a little tinkling crash as the telephone bell rang. I could see the thought leap to his mind that it might, by a miracle, be Maisie.

It was Lavinia, instead. I listened a moment, then held out the receiver to Charlie. "Will you speak to your aunt?" I asked him.

Perhaps the tone of my voice told him; perhaps he had already guessed whom to hold responsible. He stood up, strong again.

"No," he said deliberately, "never, so

long as I live!" I heard a harsh, inarticulate cry come over the wire, and hung up the receiver. Charlie went out, turning only at the door to ask: "You'll let me know if—if Maisie comes to you?" I nodded.

That promise bothered me a little later. For, though Maisie did not come nor write, she found a way as simple. I had for two days watched Charlie, roaming restlessly about the city and trying meantime to dull his pain with drink, facing failure in both his enterprises. So far as I knew, he did not sleep at all; I wondered how long a man could endure such a course. Lavinia had me nearly distracted with messages and inquiries, and again I was ready to run away. And again Fate caught me, her unwilling witness, and pinned me to my spot of vantage.

It was the telephone again, a little tinkle, a faint "Hello," and Maisie's voice came floating up out of the unknown, dulled as I had heard it last, but faintly tremulous now.

"How is he?" the voice asked simply. "I had to know!"

"Bad," I answered as briefly. "You must come back."

"After what you saw? I cannot. You must realize that."

"I can see Charlie," I said. "And you can't."

There was a note of pain, or protest, in the answering voice. "I know I cannot. But he'll get over it."

"Will you?" I asked brutally. There was no answer. "Where are you? Will nothing induce you to come back?" I was mainly selfish; I could not bear to look at Charlie when he came to me.

She answered my last question only. "If his Aunt Lavinia asked me—perhaps!"

Her high defiance silenced me. So, she would compel the countenance of her very enemies! I was a little staggered, and could only repeat: "Where are you?"

There was only a brief click for answer. The telephone was again an inanimate thing of wood and metal. I sat and pondered what to do. Should I tell Charlie—or Lavinia?

I did both, the next day; I told each of them what concerned them. Lavinia was silent—stunned, I think, by the audacity of it. But her thin face did not soften. It was hurting her more than I had thought it possible that Charlie should so finally and decisively turn his back on her and her bounties. She had no children of her own; perhaps she had kept alive some maternal chord within that withered bosom. She was insistent that I should bring him back, hungry for his mere presence.

He refused even to listen to her name. But when I told him Maisie had telephoned, I thought he would faint. He didn't; after pacing about restlessly for a few minutes, he went out again to take up his quest. Then for a matter of four or five days I lived in a nightmare of his comings and goings, watched him drinking an amount that should have killed him and only seemed to act as fuel to his energy, turned away from the fixed, fevered question in his eyes. And every day over the telephone Maisie's voice floated out of the void, asked me the same questions and faded into unanswering silence. Always Charlie missed those calls, but he could not sit still long enough to wait for them; they did not come at any fixed hour. He could only search the city aimlessly. Lavinia added to the nightmare, with her ceaseless and reiterated demands that I should send Charlie to her. I had not spared her any in telling her how her attitude had wrought on him. Suicide, I told her frankly, might be the end of it. The thought pursued her, and she pursued me. I went to her, evenings, to keep her from my office. Perhaps I should have encouraged her with wise axioms about the healing properties of time; but those axioms have always struck me as fallacious. Time kills; it does not cure. It kills an inch at a time, long before it is ready to claim the final forfeit; and when pain ceases in the dead member, we are grateful, and say we are cured.

Something had to break to ease the intolerable strain. It was as intolerable to me as to the others; I was the focus of three opposed personalities, and the

pressure was hard to bear. Lavinia perhaps had no thought of yielding when she came to my office without warning; she only meant to draw the fight to a climax and force an issue. She had always had her own way; it was incredible that life should fail her now. Then she saw Charlie's face, as he turned at her entrance.

He hated her; she knew it finally. This was not something which would blow over; he would always hate her, unless . . .

She put out her hands to him, an old woman, and for the first time in her life, pitiful to see. And he met the appeal with a quick turn that shut her even out of his view. Then he stood, looking down at the thronging street, still looking for Maisie, no doubt. I, too, found myself wishing she would go away.

"Charlie," she said, "I've only tried to do what was best for you—I've always tried to. Can't you understand?"

She might have known there was only one thing he could understand then. He never moved.

The telephone rang.

Fate had timed matters very well; I knew, somehow, that it was Maisie before I heard her speak.

"Wait a moment," I said, and then, to Lavinia: "It's Mrs. Ashburton. Perhaps you would like to give me a message for her?" But her answer, for all that I had put it so squarely before me, left me weak with surprise.

"Tell her," said Lavinia, "to—come back. I am tired—and old. I cannot expect gratitude—or love. It is our punishment, for being old!" She rose to go.

In that moment Charlie did something which went far toward closing the breach between them. He gave her his arm to the elevator, while I begged Maisie to wait and tried to deliver my message.

I never completed it; Charlie interrupted me, took the receiver from my hand. And three seconds later I was alone again.

That was virtually the end, even though they, apparently in a spirit of

courteous concession in minor matters, gave the world its dues and were married in proper form a few months later. But so far as I could see they had won their point, made themselves a law unto themselves, and, as Charlie himself phrased it, "got by." To Lavinia the fact of their marrying righted a world

they had turned topsy-turvy; for me, it was merely like providing a camera through which the world might look. Things were still upside down. And then, again, I look carefully, and I cannot tell—I am too old to know much. But perhaps they had only righted things in the first place.



## THE DRYAD CHILD

By Miriam Crittenden Carman

**H**ERE, where no footsteps pass,  
She dances with the sunbeams and the grass;  
A tulip-limbed young creature, white and bare  
Save for her gleaming hair.

Lovely and unashamed,  
Knowing no fear, sun-loving and wind-tamed,  
She hops and bounds, ineffably sweet,  
On winged elfin feet.

A Dryad Child is she,  
Who in a noonday wood forgets her tree,  
Dancing in a young wantonness of mirth  
Alone upon the earth.

Her mates are shut away,  
Waiting till nightly Pan, at close of day,  
Release them from their leafy tombs and strong,  
With a wild sylvan song.

They may not call to her,  
They may not by one whispering motion stir  
The naughty, vagrant nymph who childishly  
Laughs in her fairy glee.

And yet above her head,  
Where the vast canopy of green is spread,  
Like little blessing hands the branches bend,  
To guard—and to defend.



**A**N idle woman is often a busybody.



# GHOSTS

By Edgar Saltus

"Do you believe in ghosts?" somebody asked an old lady. "No, I do not," she replied, "but I am dreadfully afraid of them."

The ghosts promenading here will not alarm. Mainly they are gamblers, and gambling is a highly poetic diversion—not, of course, as it is conducted at Monte Carlo, where you are jostled by vulgar millionaires—but gambling as it was practised in New York at a time when there was not a shop on Fifth Avenue.

In those days a band of young men gathered together, staked their money and gambled in sonnets. The rhymed ends of lines were written in sequence on sheets of paper; these were distributed, then silence. The Pleiades were at work. The one who first properly and Petrarchianly finished his sonnet, pocketed the stakes.

One of the quickest at it was a florid troubadour with a cavalry mustache who, though he resided in the super-select home of his sisters, had, in Tompkins Square, a tower of ivory, a retreat of his own, where, for the greater glory of the Muse, in silence he came and in silence departed, until the neighbors, fancying him a counterfeiter, called the police, when, without effort, he was discovered to be an entirely reputable person, Edgar Fawcett by name.

Another gambler was Frank Saltus. Fawcett, after the fashion of poets, rather fancied himself, and Frank used to write him letters that purported to emanate from passionate young heiresses, feverishly in love with the bard. These letters, to Frank's great delight, Fawcett always read to him—like a gentleman, though, in strictest con-

fidence, yet with an air—dear me!—of what complacent satisfaction! Though he may know now that the heiresses were myths, he did not then. To the day of his death he believed in them. To the day of his death he used to say: "*Atque ego in Arcadia vixi.*" Now probably he knows. In his rocking chair on Parnassus probably, too, he forgives.

Though I do not deserve it, it may be even that I also am forgiven by him. On an occasion when a metropolitan hostess gave a reception to Oliver Wendell Holmes, I sinned most stupidly. Fawcett was bidden; I was also; and I asked him what he proposed to say to the Autocrat. "I shall say," he answered—and I could see from the manner in which he distilled his words that he had given the subject much agreeable reflection—"I shall say that meeting him is the episode of my life."

At the reception it so fell about that I made my bow before Fawcett could. I can see now the narrow, clever face, the shrewd, indulgent eyes and the gracious, gratified look I got when, bowing again, I said it. "Dr. Holmes, believe me, this is the episode of my life." From the depths of the subconscious, unintentionally, the phrase had hopped out. It was impossible to take it back, impossible to explain. My one recourse was to intercept Fawcett. But, engulfed as I immediately became by a sea of millinery, I failed. When at last I did see him, he, too, had said it. "Do you know," he ragingly told me, "Holmes acted as though I were guying him!" It was ludicrous but it was shameful. Yet today, in that rocking chair, I am sure he forgives. He had a

big head at times, but always a bigger heart.

Meanwhile the gambling continued. One of the most demoniac at it was George Edgar Montgomery, an aureoled youth who was called the Poet of the Future, and for whom today one may vainly interrogate the past. But he had his hour. In the course of it he married. At the wedding, the bride, a very pretty girl, fainted three times. To marry a poet—there, don't you think, is the joy that affrights!

There were other gamblers, other poets, young men of enormous promise which the wrestling match that life is left them no time to fulfill, yet who had for the Philistine, for the bourgeois, for humanity in general, a disdain that seemed to me leonine. They all were, or affected to be, antitheists, and because Herbert Spencer had theorized on the Unknowable, they considered him sunk in the grossest superstitions. But their negations were not always very fervent. One of them startled me, and probably himself, by predicting that for the blasphemies of his verse he would be struck by a meteor. A course of breakfasts at midnight on foie gras and curaçoa, spared him that fate.

A poet more Christian was Joaquin Miller. At school I had supped on Aristophanes, on what the fates and the Fathers have left us of Æschylus, on John Hay also, on Bret Harte, particularly on the "Songs of the Sierras." Their note, occasionally a bit Byronic perhaps, but otherwise new, seemed to me splendid. The legend of the minstrel, fighting Indians and fashioning his numbers, seemed to me superb. The possibility of seeing and speaking to him never occurred to me.

Unexpectedly that honor was mine. It was in the final seventies, at a now vanished hotel. He was entering the lobby. I lined up at once, as one does for royalty, my hat high in the air. An acquaintance presented me. Immediately I recited a verse from the "Songs." "That," I said, "is the finest thing in the English language." He was good enough to agree with me. Well, why not?

Long later, in Paris, I met Owen Meredith. To that poet of the eighteenth year I quoted some of the poetry of it, and told him the same thing. He also agreed with me. Afterward I mentioned the incident to Fawcett, who looked extremely uncomfortable. For a moment I did not understand, then, almost at once, I got it. I had omitted to say the same thing to him. The omission repaired, he thanked me with that gravity which, even in serious matters, he usually displayed.

Usually but not always. The sight of a rejected manuscript was supersufficient to make him turn his apartment into a bestiary of words that roared. "I will not wear that coat," I once, through closed doors, heard him shout at his servant. "I tell you I will not wear that coat!" He paused, possibly for breath, then in the tone of an assassin hissed: "Very good, I will wear it; and if I catch cold it will be your fault." At that, the doors were thrown open and the portrait, on foot, of an English beefeater appeared. "And how," I soothingly inquired, "is the Master?" "I am starving!" he flung at me. "So-and-So has returned my poem. Were the varlet here, I would take my battle axe and I would kill him."

All of which was pure poetry. Fawcett had no battle axe. Even otherwise, he would not have harmed a fly. Moreover, the next day or the day after, I met him on Fifth Avenue. He was arm in arm with that varlet. I knew what had happened. He had written something that pleased him. Fawcett kept an account book, alphabetically arranged. If you offended him, in it you went with bad marks after you. If he wrote anything that he particularly liked, he rose from the table, bowed to himself in the mirror and granted a general amnesty. The varlet had profited by some such remission.

In reference to those bows, Fawcett once said to me: "*Non omnis moriar.*" I think he erred. I think he is wholly dead. It is a confounded shame. He was a real poet. Yet, somehow, he just missed it. The rival whom he feared, but whom he distanced, was my broth-

er; Frank Saltus. Fawcett could scribble a song, as a poet should, in no time. But what he scribbled he rewrote, and wrote again, and what he wrote was in English only. One evening, in less than an hour, Frank Saltus wrote verses to Patti in four languages and put them to music. His facility was frightful and even uncanny. He wrote as a bird sings, spontaneously, without effort. But he never revised. What he had written he had written, and according to him that was the end of it. It was the end of it. Today he is as dead as Fawcett.

But I believe he was a genius, and that I think none of the rest of the Pleiades was. Prodigal in all things, he threw his genius out of the window. Longfellow said of him that he never knew a young man better equipped for the vocation of poet. Of the equipment there remain today two original metres, which recent rhymesters have appropriated, and the fading echo of after-dinner talk that was as brilliant as Barbey d'Aurevilly's. Like Fawcett, he just missed it. He missed it because perhaps he had a fiber too many, as Fawcett missed it because, it may be, he had a fiber too few. To contemporary critics both were minor violins in the great orchestra of letters. But at least they were in the orchestra. That they are not there now must be quite immaterial to them. Yet, everything being possible, when they return here, one or the other may hold the baton.

Another ghost is Stedman. The Pleiades regarded him negligently. He was a banker, a broker, something in the Street, consequently good at figures, and it was held that no mathematician can be a poet. And yet why not? With figures, mere figures, with figures only and nothing else, a human insect discovered a planet. If that were not epic, one may wonder what is.

But it was not Stedman who did it. In looking back I can see him passing into darkness—see, too, others coming to the light. Among the latter was Stuart Merrill. In the erudite pandemonium that occultism is, Swinburne is reported to have been Catullus

and Tennyson Ovid. The report may be untrue, but that does not detract from its interest. On the other hand, assuming its validity, then Merrill may have been Lully. What he has written is just so many bars of harmony, pure indeed but not always simple. Merrill was not either. Born with a gold pen in his mouth, he had every gift, including the supreme one which is serenity. He would never be serious about anybody, about anything. Such an attitude is charming in addition to being eminently Pyrrhonian. In conjunction with his verse—always in French—it took him to the door of the Académie Française, and might have taken him within had he not been an American, more exactly, a New Yorker.

But one never knows. To become a mandarin of the Occident is perhaps a matter of predestination. Lacking that, then, as Gautier somewhere stated, three hundred masterpieces recognized as such by the genuflections of an adoring universe, and even by the Academy itself, will not suffice for election. But, if you are predestined, then, however poverty-stricken your wares, Sesame—you are in there.

Bourget is a case in point. Always he has tried so hard to write well, and never once has succeeded. Verlaine is another. After his discharge from prison, I had the signal honor of meeting him, and I can see him now, Socrates and Anacreon in one, hiccupping down the laurel lanes, paying with enigmatic songs the food which young poets provided, distilling a mysterious music from the absinthe offered by them, and presenting at last a spectacle unique in literature, that of a singer applauded in a charity bed and rising from it to become one of the glories of France—though not of the French Academy.

It was through Merrill that I met him. Merrill previously had kissed his hand to Fifth Avenue. Before sailing he gave a dinner at which Harden-Hickey, George Pellé, myself and several others were present. In the course of it the post-mortem came up. Somebody expressed the usual stupidity that there is nothing in it. It was ob-

jected that such a view was not scientific, but, as it might also have been objected—and probably was—that science is the classification of human ignorance, the objection fell flat. Then Pellew, a poet interested in psychical phenomena, related ghostly experiences and promised that if after death he found anything he would return and tell of it. To many of us the promise seemed an impossible draft on an equally impossible future. Yet, that same night, Pellew, on going home, slipped on the stoop, fell backward and broke his skull. Later, that promise of his, he kept. He returned and spoke through Mrs. Piper. I am not making this up; it is all down in the reports concerning her.

As these ghosts go, Pellew, obviously, is *primus*. But Harden-Hickey runs him close. In Paris, where I first met him, he enjoyed, in addition to a problematic title, the formidable repute of being the crack duelist of France. A poet and a wit, he was doubly dangerous. His pen stung as promptly as his sword. Therewith he was antithesis made man. He looked like a buccaneer, behaved like a débutante, talked like Rabelais, lived like a sage, edited a comic paper and wrote a book on suicide.

Born—and very modestly—in San Francisco, in what manner he became a baron I never inquired. There are mysteries which one prefers to ignore rather than to elucidate. It may be that the Comte de Chambord, whose henchman he had been, gave him the title. It may also have been self-bestowed. But not, I think, a decoration that he wore. Poets all have their

crosses; in Paris they are those of the Legion of Honor. Yet presently he wearied of the boulevards, or they did of him, and he returned to this country where, apparently without effort, he conceived the idea of resigning the title of baron and assuming that of king. At Trinidad, a speck of an island off Brazil, he proposed to establish a monarchy and proposed also to reign. To me he was graciously pleased to offer the post of laureate. As I could have carried my poetic luggage, without a wrinkle, in the pocket of an evening waistcoat, I was immensely flattered, particularly as he had already established a chancellery in New York and another in London; and I could picture myself in a barge down there, a court barge, crimson-hulled, purple-rigged, freighted with youth and beauty. But not a bit of it. The Powers intervened, or he said they did, and suddenly he killed himself.

Harden-Hickey's poetical luggage was, if possible, as light as my own, but, in point of time, he belonged to the Victorian era, during which, in this country, in France and in England, there was a constant cascade of real song. Today there is no more verse like that. There are no poets now such as those who have gone. At the beginnings of centuries that is usually the case. But in a generation or two, bards will bloom anew. Then they, too, will pass, and a hundred years hence it will be said that there is no more verse like theirs. Yet always, in default of poets, there are their ghosts, and always, when these are laid, always, too, will there be other poets.



THE inevitable—Making good the note you signed to help a friend.



A GREAT many in the Social Swim use the underhand stroke.



# THE TRIBE DISBANDS

By Basil Macdonald Hastings

In the growing up of boys there is a certain element of the pathetic—the passing of a period of delightful irresponsibility. This is the concluding story in Mr. Hastings' series. These unruly kids, whom he has fitly called "The Tribe," are such deliciously human children that it is a pity to see them grow up and become dignified.

ORDINARILY speaking, we hated the very mention of the word "visitors." It meant that if we were playing in the garden we had to go in, or, at any rate, retire to the back garden where we could not be seen from the dining room windows. If it was one of our unlucky days, we had to be washed for inspection.

Then we would line up outside the dining room door and there would be a fight as to who was to go in first. When the nurse had settled that, the ones at the back would give a mighty push as soon as the door opened, so that Agatha, who was usually in front, could make her first appearance before the visitor on her hands and knees.

Then this sort of sickening conversation would start with each one of us.

"And is this really Stanley?" the visitor, usually some wild-looking female, would ask.

What the dickens did she think I was?

"He is a big boy," the female would say. "A very big boy—and he looks so healthy."

Some visitors were better than others and either bought us toys or gave us money.

Once a female called, and when we paraded in the drawing room she said to Lionel:

"Well, you are a big boy! Do you know that I nursed you when you were a tiny baby in arms? You must give me a kiss."

"Are you going to give us any money?" he said, glaring at her.

That smashed her. She got very red and didn't stay long. We always succeeded in making things very unpleasant for the paupers, as we used to call the people who gave us nothing.

There was one wonderful chap who called sometimes and took Lionel and me on the river. He had been gold mining in Australia, and he gave us a great box of specimens, gold and silver bearing quartz. He labeled them all and told us all about mining. We liked him so much that Lionel and I thought out a present for his birthday. It was a penwiper with a silver skull and crossbones on it, and we took it in a parcel down to the river with us one day and gave it to him. He was awfully pleased, and said that before he'd always wiped his pens on the tablecloth, on his handkerchief and the curtains, especially if the cat wasn't handy.

The drawing room was about the only room in the house that we really hated. It was packed with what the Pater called gimcracks, and nearly everything that fell down broke. None of the chairs were meant to be sat in, and they were so valuable that they were covered up with cloths. There was a piano containing a threepenny bit, which Hugh in a mad moment had once slipped through the keys, and there was an album of prehistoric photographs. Each portrait in this book had some comic remark scribbled under it in pencil by one of us, and if a

fat visitor who was in the collection picked it up she might find herself labeled, "When does the balloon go up?"

Sometimes married uncles and aunts with children would come and stay with us. We liked this as the child cousins generally had pocket money and we could show them how to spend it. Once we had a great-uncle in the house, who was a general, though only in the American army. He was deaf, caused through his standing too close to a cannon that went off during the Civil War in America. He was very, very old, and so was his wife, who used to roar at him through a speaking trumpet. He could tell some good stories about battles but he was horribly ignorant about real history like Horatius, Curtius and Castor and Pollux.

Perhaps the most satisfactory thing about visitors staying in the house was the fact that they would go out at night with the Pater and Mater to the theater. This gave us all a superb chance. There are games you can play in the dark which are utterly silly by daylight; and what on earth is the good of owning a dark lantern, as Lionel and I did, if you have to go to bed at half past six?

We never enjoyed our indoor games as much as we did those in the garden. Walls and a roof tired us very quickly. We would start with a splendid idea and stick to it for about an hour, but then we would find ourselves looking out of the window, counting raindrops and feeling generally bored.

Lionel and I had a superb army of soldiers and some good artillery, which could be loaded with gunpowder. We collected our soldiers year after year and rarely broke them, so that we must have had a thousand between us before we were sent off to school. It was a superb sight when all the army were set out with little white tents in the background. Forts were built of books and bricks and old tins, and we had a huge box of silver sand to pour over the floor to represent the desert. You could raise a dust storm with the bellows whenever you liked.

Perhaps our finest feat (and we had

the Pater up to look at it) was the blowing up of a tin and wooden fort. We made a superb bomb by tightly wrapping up about six penn'orth of gunpowder in an oiled rag. Then we put the bomb just inside the fort and laid a long train of gunpowder from the bomb to a far corner of the nursery. The Pater and the kids all stood at the door ready to run if the house was blown up. We drew down the blinds to make the room dark and then Lionel applied the match to the train.

It was beautiful to watch the flame race across the sandy desert and enter the front door of the fort. Then for a moment we held our breath. Would the bomb go off? First of all, the inside of the fort became brilliantly lit up. The oiled rag covering of the bomb had caught on fire and was blazing grandly.

Then came the crash. It was not so loud as we expected, but the fort was superbly shattered and the falling tins made an absolutely thrilling noise. That brought the Mater up.

Of course the room was full of smoke and smelt awfully. When we pulled up the blinds we found a pretty bad burn in the floor boards. This made the Mater angry, and she told the Pater, who was laughing like anything, that he ought to be ashamed of himself. The Pater got a little red, but he was still chuckling when he went downstairs.

As the regular rule of the house was that we had to go to bed at half past six, we had to invent games for the night nursery. Perhaps the favorite was one we knew as "Irish Bogs."

Two beds were pulled together, side by side, with a gap of about a yard between them. This gap we covered over with sheets and counterpanes so that you could not see the floor between the beds. Then we would walk across the beds pretending we were travelers in Ireland. Of course as soon as we put our feet on the covering of the gap we would collapse onto the floor between the beds, and by this means we got the superb sensation of sinking in an Irish bog.

Thus Lionel and I would stroll about arm in arm (in our nightgowns of course) on the solid part and talk like this:

"Always come to Ireland for my holidays. Don't you?"

"Always, my friend. Delightful scenery, charming people."

"I quite agree with you. And what a lot of rot it is about the bogs!"

"Absolute rot. We know perfectly well there isn't such a thing in Ireland."

At that precise moment we would step on the bedclothes that covered the gap and sink helplessly to the floor. Then the kids would yell and yell again with delight. It was like a kind of play for them. They knew the joke absolutely by heart but that didn't matter. They laughed just as much the hundredth time as the first.

When the Pater and Mater were out at the theater, which only happened very rarely, we had the whole house to play in, and on a dark winter's night between ten and eleven I don't know anything to beat burgling with dark lanterns.

We would dare each other to steal the most risky booty. One night I got down two floors, passing one of the servants on the landing by hanging by the tips of my fingers on the *inside* of the spiral staircase, and actually robbed the Pater's dressing table of a razor and a packet of cough lozenges, which we gulped down in no time. (Afterward we found they weren't cough lozenges but tablets you drop in your bath if you have rheumatism.) I thought I'd done pretty well with these two trophies, but Lionel beat me easily.

Although he had only his nightgown on, he got through the bathroom window on the second floor and then, holding his dark lantern in his teeth, slid down the roof of the conservatory onto the dining room balcony. From here he slipped into the garden and round the back into the scullery.

At the sink a servant was cleaning fish. Lionel gave a low whistle and the servant looked up, scared to death, as the scullery was quite a long way from the kitchen where the others were. Lionel whistled again and flashed his lantern. The servant went chalk white and simply shot out of the scullery. Lionel then grabbed the fish and silently came back to us, traveling over the conservatory

and through the bathroom window as before. When he returned with two dripping fresh haddocks, you could have knocked us all down with a feather. But the best part was to come.

Taking the fish with us, we got out on the little stone balcony that ran round the top of the house and made our way to this particular servant's window. Luckily it was open and we soon had the two fish nicely laid out in her bed.

About two hours afterward there was a frightful row, but we didn't hear it as we had fallen asleep while we were waiting for it.

Though none of us ever went to a theater till we had been to school and come home for our holidays, we had quite a fancy for plays. Agatha, Lionel and I were not so keen, but the younger ones were pretty mad about it.

The performances generally took place in the kitchen, which was very large and had plenty of doors at the stage end. A curtain was rigged up and the footlights consisted of a row of candles in tins.

First of all the kids only did what they called tableaux. Madejine would announce the name of the tableau before the screen was pulled aside, otherwise you would never have known what it was. Ones that they did were "The Crib," "The Lady of Shalott," "Alas, My Poor Brother!" "Death of Nelson," "Cinderella," "Romeo and Juliet."

The worst one was "Alas, My Poor Brother!" Another awful one was "Romeo and Juliet." Angela was the Juliet. She wore a nightgown and stood on a chair behind a screen, looking simply ghastly. Hugh was the Romeo, and he was supposed to be standing under the balcony playing a banjo. If you hadn't known the name of the tableau you'd have said it was some woman who had got out of bed to throw a penny to a nigger whose singing prevented her from going to sleep.

The plays weren't much, but they were certainly a good deal better than the tableaux. When the kids had something to say you didn't notice the clothes and scenery so much.

There was only one program, espe-

cially typed by the nurse, and it was passed round before the curtain went up. Here is a sample announcement.

THEATER ROYAL  
"THE MYSTERY OF BURTON HALL"

A Play in a  
Prologue and Four Scenes

by  
Misses Madeline, Angela and Dorothy and  
Masters Hugh, Eric and Bernard.

As far as I remember, Hugh murdered Eric in the prologue, and Eric, with his dying breath, cursed Hugh, stating that he would rue the day. Then forty years pass away and the play proper begins. Hugh is dead and his three daughters are living at Burton Hall, but the brokers are in. The brokers are two highwaymen in disguise, and they suggest to the three daughters that they should go to Monte Carlo with the remains of the cash and win a fortune. Their friend, the Rev. Algernon Stubbs, tries to stop this, but the girls won't listen to him. The clergyman, played by Bernard, always walked about in a surplice—one of Agatha's chemises.

The Casino at Monte Carlo was the next scene. All the three girls won fortunes and carried them off in bags. The next was the King's Highway, where the highwaymen robbed the girls of their money. The last scene was back at Burton Hall. The two highwaymen came in and said that they had only been joking when they robbed the girls. They were not really highwaymen but both dukes who wanted to get married. This put things all right. Each took a girl, and as there was one left the clergyman took her.

The dialogue was made up as they went along, Madeline keeping an eye on them in the wings in case they missed anything important. If they did, she came on after the act and said, "Ursula ought to have said so-and-so; I have to tell you or you won't understand the next scene," and then she'd go off again. The Pater always clapped that.

The best drama they ever gave us was called "Foiled." It was all about a shady solicitor, and that tickled the Pater tremendously. Bernard was the solicitor and there was a shipwreck in it. That was why it was the best.

The shipwreck was awfully well done. You couldn't see the sea, but the waves kept coming over the side of the ship and falling into the scuppers. The scuppers were a big tin footbath, and Madeline threw the pailfuls of waves from the wings. Hugh and Eric got absolutely drenched. Hugh was the hero and Eric was the villain, and Hugh threw him overboard. The shady solicitor was lashed to the mast and supposed to starve to death after the crew had escaped in the lifeboat.

I remember that night the two French boys from next door came to see the play. They had their best clothes on and clapped like anything till Madeline made a mistake with one of the pailfuls of waves. The Pater got wet, too, but he only laughed.

In fact, I don't think the Pater liked anything so much on earth as these plays. He was always frightfully solemn at the solemn parts and roared like mad if there was anything comic. At the end he clapped and clapped till he was tired. If you wanted to cheer him up you only had to tell him that there was to be a play the next Saturday.

No one ever died in our house except a grandmother. When we were ill considerable fuss was made over us. So it wasn't a bad thing to sham being sick once in a while. It was splendid to have a fire in the nursery, and you were usually given a good toy if you had the measles so that you shouldn't spend all the time scratching yourself. Once we were all ill at the same time with scarlatina, and it was glorious.

It was hot summer weather, so we had no fire, and that spoilt things a little. It's wonderful what a lot of things you want a fire for. But we made up for the lack of fire when Hugh and Eric got their engine from Tupence the Most, who kept a sort of old curiosity shop.

It was a magnificent engine that worked by steam and set about a million wheels whirring when it was in good order. Hugh and Eric had persuaded Alice, the housemaid, to get it. They had been wanting it for a long time, and they thought that if they sent round



tuppence for a week's hire and let it be known that we were all at death's door, the old fellow would probably part with the treasure. Sure enough, he did.

You never saw such a thing as this engine when it was really started. It made a frightful noise and the smell was horrible. At first it didn't go at all well, but Lionel and I helped Hugh and Eric with it, and after a day or two it was whizzing splendidly.

One night about nine o'clock, about half an hour after the Pater had gone to bed, we got it working better than ever before. The wheels were going at a furious rate and the smoke was pouring out in volumes.

Presently we heard the Pater coming upstairs. No doubt he had heard the engine rattling and wanted to know what was going on. By some means or other we stopped the engine and pushed it under a bed. Then some genius—I think it was Madeline—set fire to a lot of brown paper that was in the grate.

When the Pater came in he wanted to know where the smoke came from. We pointed to the brown paper which we said had caught alight accidentally through the candle falling off the mantelpiece. The Pater swallowed this like a lamb and went off without rowing anybody.

Soon we had the engine going again and the smoke was like a fog. You couldn't see across the room. Lionel and I stuffed the thing with all the fuel we could get, even breaking up a kid's toy theater, in the hope that the engine would explode. It did in the end, but Lionel and I were in bed and not looking, so that the explosion was half spoilt for us.

After the explosion the smoke was so bad that we were all coughing our hearts out and some of the kids were crying. Then someone noticed that two of the beds were on fire. The kids in the beds jumped out, and then, because they were so frightened, they got back again! Then Agatha, Lionel and I dragged them out onto the landing and shouted "Fire! Fire!" over the banisters.

After that everything was too heavenly for words. I had a fireman's outfit, in-

cluding a helmet and a hatchet. Lionel fought me for it, and in the end he got the helmet and I kept the hatchet. Then we rushed into the fiery furnace and threw open the windows to let the smoke out. The smoke went out all right but the flames got worse.

The nurse rushed to the Pater's bedroom and hammered on his door.

"Come out, sir—come out!" she yelled. "The house is on fire!"

But the Pater wouldn't be hurried. Nothing on earth could make him bustle.

"All in good time, nurse," he said, "all in good time. Wait till I find the coat I usually wear on these occasions."

Of course we all roared with laughter, but it wasn't so funny as it sounded. It seems there had been a fire once before, at a time we couldn't remember, and the coat the Pater was wearing on that occasion was badly singed. He had put it away to wear at the next fire.

When he came out in his fire coat, he put on a silly soft hat that for some weird reason he would always wear indoors, went straight out into the street and rang the fire alarm. The Mater was furious because she said the fire could have been put out with a few buckets of water, but the Pater said it was as well to take no risks.

Meanwhile we were all charging up and down the stairs with cans and basins of water from the bathroom, flooding everything that looked as if it might burn. Lionel threw a canful over Madeline's red hair and then pretended it was an accident. I found out that you can't do anything with a hatchet at a fire. It's no use at all except to smash things. I can't think why firemen have hatchets.

Suddenly the fire brigade arrived. It was thrilling. The Mater and the nurse bundled us all into the drawing room. The windows of this room overlooked the street and we had a superb view. There was one engine outside and soon two more galloped up. Millions of people had followed them, and the square was crammed.

We threw up the drawing room windows and crouched by them in our nightgowns, waiting to be rescued. The

crowd pointed at us and we all felt absolutely thrilled. Then some of them started to laugh. They had seen Lionel and his helmet. I was awfully glad then that I had got the worst of the fight.

The firemen clattered up and down the stairs and the excitement was superb. It seems they soon put the fire out, but they didn't go at once but helped to clear up the wreckage.

Then came the great debate as to where we were all to sleep. As we were only just beginning to get over the scarlatina, the nurse was certain that some of us would die. This consoled us a good deal for the fact that no one was burnt to death by the fire. We scarified the smallest kids by saying they were certain to die first and we arranged to draw lots for any decent toys they had.

None of us died, so the nurse was wrong. I got worse, and so did one or two others, but we all got better again.

The most astonishing thing about the fire was that it did not cost the Pater anything. Some insurance people came and looked at it and after a few weeks gave the Pater a huge sum of money, with which he bought new beds and so forth. But perhaps the absolute limit was that Lionel claimed five shillings for the value of the exploded engine, and I claimed two for the kid's toy theater that I had smashed up for fuel. We both got the money!

When Agatha, Lionel and I first went to school I don't think we had any idea of what it really meant. It was splendid to have such piles of new clothes, a hair-brush all to one's self, an enormous new portmanteau with one's name in full on it and many other things, and I suppose we were dazzled. I know Lionel and I didn't mind driving off from home in a cab one little bit. We felt too splendid to be unhappy.

I'm not going to write here about our schooldays, but the story about the tribe wouldn't be quite finished without something about things after the great separation.

We were away a year. When we went home—how small and quiet it was! Those rooms that we used to think so

big, that garden that seemed the largest we had ever seen—how cramped they seemed after the great halls and corridors, fields and playgrounds of the school!

And how quietly they all spoke! How tiny was the Mater's voice, how soft and gentle the Pater's, so very much in contrast with the stern tones that we thought we remembered. Of course at school one always shouted. No doubt the Pater and Mater found us awfully noisy when we first came back.

It was very difficult to get on with the kids. Agatha, too, back from the convent, was pretty hopeless. She had been polished to death. But the kids were just as they had been. Lionel and I were changed. We could not help being conscious of our tremendous superiority, and the games we used to play only a year ago seemed very poor entertainment indeed.

After a while we melted a little and condescended to teach the kids football, racquets and a variety of playground games. By this means we got quite friendly with them—but never again did we play on the same level. That long year spent with hundreds of other boys of all types had educated us to a new taste. Once we did try to revive Castor and Pollux, but it went awfully badly and we never thought of doing it again.

Going to school seems to start a new kind of childhood. I was eleven when I first went and Lionel was twelve. I'm glad we didn't go till then because the times the tribe had together were awfully good. We wouldn't have known each other so well, I'm sure, if the three eldest had gone to school earlier.

We found a new condescension in the way that both the Pater and Mater treated us. The Mater was good for money any time you wanted it, and this, of course, made the kids awfully jealous. The Pater was always anxious for our company and simply pelted us with questions. You see, he had been at the same school as a boy, so he was naturally curious about it. After we had answered a long string of questions he would always say that it was quite evident

that the old school was going to the dogs.

It was very wonderful indeed to be able to get money to go to the Oval when we wanted. (Sometimes we went to Lord's, but we never liked it. It didn't seem like real cricket, sitting under a cover just as if you were at a theater.) It was delightful to be allowed to sit up long past half past six, our old bedtime, and have supper with the Mater. It was very swagger for Lionel and me to have a room to ourselves in which we could smoke cigarettes all night if we liked. And it was glorious above all to be treated and talked to very much as if we were grown-ups.

One night Lionel and I were in bed reading when we heard some muffled noises coming from the night nursery where the kids slept. We guessed that they were up to some larks, and wondered if it were worth while going down. We

decided that it was not and went on with our books. The noises went on and we heard some smothered laughter.

Presently Lionel threw down his book and said: "We may as well have a squint, in case they're doing anything decent." I got up with him then and we went downstairs.

We opened the night nursery door very quietly. All the kids were awake and enjoying themselves hugely because Hugh and Eric were doing "Irish Bogs" just as we did—it seemed ever so long ago. When we came in, Eric and Hugh stopped playing. They didn't start to play again, though we stopped for quite half an hour. Presently we felt cold and went back to our room. A few minutes afterward we heard the same noises and the same smothered laughter. They were at it again—now that we had left them. Yes—the tribe was broken up.



## I BRING YOU ALL I HAVE

By Witter Bynner

I BRING you all I have, my life, my work;  
 I lay my soul before your smile.  
 But in the wind of one light word  
 Idly directed by a passer-by,  
 A word no more conserved for you  
 Than for another of the crowd,  
 My poems, all my treasures,  
 Are puffed away,  
 My life and work are written, sealed, forgotten. . . .  
 I shall unseal them while you are not watching,  
 And add to them and come again  
 And bring you all I have, my life, my work,  
 And lay my soul before your smile.



FOLKS who boast of their family trees generally neglect to mention the shady branches.

## THE POET RETURNS

By Victor B. Neuburg

THE starlight lends me raiment;  
(How slowly old songs die!)  
A dream I give in payment,  
Of my dreams newborn and shy.

A moonbeam lends its burden;  
(How slowly old songs fail!)  
A dream I give as guerdon;  
For all my dreams are pale.

So through the dark I wander;  
(How sweet the old songs seem!)  
All undisturbed I ponder;  
All palely still I dream.

Beneath the stately beeches  
(How sweet the old songs were!)  
I mouth my silver speeches  
To make my own heart stir.

Beside the curious river  
(How strange the old songs are!)  
I glide to watch the shiver  
On the water of a star.

Under the night's grave splendor  
(How far the wise old songs!)  
I murmur words as tender  
As a lover's fancied wrongs.

The strange, strong songs I fashioned  
(Those songs grown now so old!)  
Seem vaguely fair and passioned,  
Now my hot heart is cold.

The starlight lends me raiment;  
My path a white moonbeam.  
A song I give in payment,  
For love I add a dream.



## FATE'S LUCK

By Furnley Maurice

FOR the last three weeks, the talk at Anyson's rooms, whenever his friend Brookwell, the amateur poet, came along, was Anyson's love business.

Anyson felt what he called "all in" since the white lady of his heart had been denied him. He was sure that no fault in himself had forced her to be cruel. It was her father's fault. John Critchley loved his daughter, and dreaded, and said plainly when Anyson asked him, that he dreaded any man who threatened to take her from him. Critchley told him that Lena had been her mother's friend since she was two years old. Her mother died when the girl was fourteen, and since then she had been the companion of her father. In his glowing opinion she had but one solitary fault: she spent her money too easily. But as he always had plenty for her, it did not matter much.

"And the worst of it is," said Anyson to his friend, "that the poor old fellow really believes what he says. He gets oratorical, emotional. He shoves his arms about—"

"Well," said Brookwell, "that's nothing against a man. You've done that at me for the last six months, since you were hit out—and yet I think no less of you."

"Go it, my boy," said Anyson; "your gentle implication that you cannot think less of me than you do now is cheering, friendly."

"It wasn't intended to be," said Brookwell. "But go on—pour out your grief." And he settled himself back in a comfortable chair and smoked.

"Most of it is poured out already, but

you don't seem to warm up to it. Hang it, man, why don't you sympathize?"

"On the contrary," said Brookwell precisely, "I have always been deeply interested in human misery. But since I was a small boy and wrote two poems and a long letter every day to the girl at the pastrycook's, I have kept clear of the—the—something—passion. What's the adjective?"

"Arthur, if you value my friendship, don't act the fool!"

"It is my aim in life to learn to act a part which most people are born to—"

"Keep those gags to yourself. I can't follow you there. You are always cutting into my dullness and philistinism and Lord knows what. But we can't all talk pretty to girls and go and leave them; we can't all wrap ourselves in our higher aims. That's what you call your poetry, isn't it?"

"Victor, you are getting angry. Cease!" Brookwell raised a dramatic arm. "You know I don't talk about those things very much. It is not friendly to use what I tell you in our serious moments for jibes in our hours of levity."

"Levity!" exclaimed Anyson. "The levity's all yours. I'm talking about losing the one girl I want, and you start laughing at me!"

"But, hang it, Vic, you talk of nothing else!"

"Talk of—" started Anyson, with somewhat ruffled feelings.

"Cease!" said Brookwell, and raised an arm to shield him from the approaching storm. "If you promise to sit still and not interrupt, nor earn my disgust by trying to parry my neat and rapier-like thrusts with your blundering scav-

enger broom, I will tell you a little story—a story I got from Lena Critchley's lips. She talks plainly to me because she imagines that what she says doesn't affect me. She is very open to me.

"It has been said by some philosopher that to cheer a person in misery we should point out to him a near friend in worse misery. There is," said Brookwell, seriously, "the essence of real tragedy in what I am about to disclose." Having secured attention, he went on:

"Norman Boyard knelt for Lena's hand—I believe that is how you do it—two days after you did. He got shot, too. He thought he had an easy thing of it, because if anyone was to get the girl the old man would prefer Norman, and Norman knew that. So did Lena. So did I. But, as you have so acutely observed on many occasions, Norman is a funny fellow. But now the poor devil is funnier. In fact, Victor—I am serious now—he has gone right off his nut."

"Not mad?" said Victor.

"There is no other explanation possible. He went straight from her, with the print of the Critchley drawing room carpet on his knees, and took the waitress at his restaurant for a long walk. Knowing he came from Critchley's office, where pay is good, this waitress made the most of her chance; and whether it was jealous spite against Lena or sheer madness I don't know, but in a week he was married to the woman. Lena says she is a widow with three children."

Anyson's face was lined with astonishment. "He's trapped!" was his cry.

"I said, 'Lena says,'" resumed Brookwell. "She has three children, but she isn't a widow."

"Bigamy?" asked Victor with concern.

"No," answered the other with forced calm: "no 'gamy' at all!"

"Oh, Brook, ease off! He's not in a box like that?"

"Conscientious, sympathetic, impetuous, he was made to fit that box!"

"But where did you hear all this? Has it all happened in a month? I haven't heard a word—"

"Lena told me some of it," answered Brookwell, "and today I met Norman in the street."

"He talked?"

"He told me all about it—his heart is bursting with it. He knows he was a fool, and he can't forget Lena. He is going away for work and will send money to his legal wife. Of course he is finished at Critchley's office."

There was a silence, broken finally by Anyson.

"It's funny how people will talk to you, for all your sarcasm and idiotic ways."

"You do it yourself," answered Brookwell. And in truth the great power that held these two friends was the attraction of opposites.

"Old Critchley will be all cut up if he learns about Norman," said Brookwell. "Norman was one of his pet institutions. Critchley took him from Sunday school when he was young, and set to work to make a model man of him. He will die if he hears the complete story. Therefore I must act. I am commissioned by Lena, who flatters me by calling me the most artistic liar of her acquaintance, to keep as much of the story as possible from her father. It is a disgraceful business all through. And, Vic, you wouldn't find two straighter men than old Critchley and Norman Boyard if you headed a search party in Paradise. Norman told me today that after things had happened he gave the woman his word to marry her. After his word was given he learned the kind of woman she was. 'I couldn't go back on my word,' he said. That's old Critchley's training. There are not two squarer men on earth!"

"That's true—that's true," said Anyson. "But fancy an innocent, harmless fellow like Boyard getting caught like that!"

"I will write a story about it," grinned Brookwell, "called 'The Sudden Father.'"

"Better call it 'Sudden Death,'" said Victor grimly. "But there was always something wrong with Boyard's eyes. Big, wide open ones!"

"He was born in Queensland. There

is a lot of sun in Queensland. His mother was sunstruck!"

"Where do you get all the family secrets?" asked Anyson. "You're like an old woman for ferreting things out!"

"People talk," said Brookwell simply. "I enjoy it and keep quiet. I am never surprised—never shocked; I just listen. But I'll tell you what: as you seem so chewed up with woe I will promise to stick in a word or two for you with Lena and the old man."

"I knew he would say what he did to you when you asked. He told me years ago that he didn't want to lose the girl. If he could let her go to any man it would have been to poor old Boyard. He was like an adopted son, and the old man reckoned to keep them near him."

## II

So Norman Boyard shut the gates of the city after him with a bang, and went back to the bush where he was reared. He was a man with an exasperating yet admirable character. It was as impossible that he could ever be mean as it was inconceivable that he should ever be level-headed, and observers like Brookwell admired him while they pitied. He had been a brother to Lena Critchley, a son to the old man; and to Brookwell and Anyson, the inseparables, he was a distant friend, often mute and retiring, often taking part in their argument with a nervous sort of excitement. Boyard had avoided Anyson when he detected his affection for Lena, and while he disliked the interference, he stood off to give Anyson a fair chance. When he learned that Anyson had tried and failed, he tried himself, and took his failure with a frantic disappointment that landed the unfortunate fellow where he was now.

"Whom *do* you love?" he cried out to the girl, and got no answer; and did not dream that her heart sang to Brookwell—he knew Brookwell did not worry about women.

When Boyard shut the town gates after him he slammed them on his happy past. He was tied to a woman

whom even kindly old Critchley could not help calling dissolute, and he had shocked Lena Critchley into a conception of what desperation love meant for some men. But Boyard trampled on his pleasant memories and tried to grind Lena's image out of his heart. His life with his wife became unbearable; his pitying heart found some sort of love for her fatherless or multi-fathered children, but to the woman he became a brute, a nervous brute. But it is not necessary to follow that terrible matrimonial course. He took various jobs and got enough money to live; he even lost a job in a sawmill because he worked too hard. His boss could not keep him going except by working hard himself, and that was unreasonable. Boyard was worried off his feet. In one of their many quarrels he took the woman by the throat and left blue finger marks there. Then she cleared out of the house for good, and left him to care for her children and earn their bread at the same time. He was not a man who would visit a mother's sins upon the helpless results of them, so, with the help of neighbors, he performed the double office of father and mother for some time. At last he could stand the strain no longer. He got the children into a government home—no easy business—and then went round the country working and wildly roaming, before an impulse brought him back to Melbourne.

He bought a revolver, and mad as a harassed, starved, nervously constituted man could be, he walked into John Critchley's office.

"Mr. Critchley," he said with a hard, white face, "I have come to shoot you!" and he held up the revolver.

"Leave this place! Leave this place!" cried the alarmed old man.

"No! No!" said Boyard with terrible calmness and a cunning glance at the door. "It's all your fault. I've reasoned it all out. I'm not mad yet—I can reason. You said a man must always act square to women; I acted square and lost everything—"

"You're mad, Norman!" cried Critchley.

"My job, Lena's affection and yours,

all my friends—I've lost them all. Oh, I'm not mad—I can reason. But before I go properly mad I'm going to put a bullet in you. You don't deserve to live. You should have taught me that a dash of the scoundrel in his character makes a man. You'd think I was mad, wouldn't you? But oh, no, I'm not mad—I can reason—I've reasoned it all out. You kept me chained to you. You didn't tell me there were women like her plotting for such soft fellows as I was. But I'm not soft now! Oh, no! Oh, I've reasoned it all out!"

It was plain enough that Boyard was mad, and Critchley stood up to say so. The old man was not afraid, but he did not know what to do. He saw the dangerous weapon brandished in all directions, and as it appeared in no hurry to go off he thought the thing not loaded, and took up the argument.

His office was a lonely place, and he could be shot and no one know it for hours after. The whole affair seemed so very absurd that its seriousness came home very slowly to the old man, after the first sudden shock. Yet he feared that if he ran or called out it would make the necessary excitement in the room that would cause the madman's finger to press the trigger. He took up the argument.

"But sit down, Norman; be calm for a moment. Why shoot me?"

"What's that you say? Why? Oh, you've got to be killed; you're a menace, a danger. You teach people to be good and make fools of them. Look at me. Oh, I've reasoned it all out!"

"But I've always been good to you."

"That's why—that's just why!" Norman talked in jerks. "You made me a fool, a soft fool ready for this woman. I'm going mad, but I'm not mad yet. Before I go mad I shall have revenge on you. Keep back from that door!" His cunning eyes caught a movement of the old man's. "I must shoot you—but I'll tell you why first. You made me a fool—and now—" Up went the revolver.

A cry broke from the old man. He darted out from his table and made a grasp for the arm as it went up. He was too late. The movement woke

the frantic brute in Boyard. He was a bush-bred boy with sinews like wire.

"Keep back—keep back," he cried, "and take your due like a man!"

He pushed Critchley from him, and as he stumbled backward fired at him.

When the old fellow was helplessly groaning on the floor the sight seemed to affect Boyard somewhat. Some idea of what he had done seemed to peep into his harrowed consciousness. He could not go away. He went mumbling around the room, standing here, leaning there, with his eyes always on the fallen figure.

"It was his due," he kept saying. "I've reasoned it all out!"

He could see that he had not killed the old man, but he did not trouble about that. He was helpless and injured, and that seemed to satisfy the mania. Boyard was half frightened at what he had done. He sat down and watched his victim as he groaned, and watched the chest heaving like a bellows.

They could not remain there forever and not be discovered, although a pistol shot is too insignificant a sound to arouse a building in a busy street. It was the best of fortune that sent Brookwell to them. It was late when he came. He had turned in for a moment on his way home. He ran up the stairs and knocked on the door, and without waiting further, went in. It was dusk, and the light in the office very dim. He saw the figure in the chair and the other lying at his feet.

"God Almighty! What's this?" exclaimed Brookwell.

"Oh, it's all right," whined the madman. "It was his due." Boyard was panting like an exhausted runner. "I shot him with this." He held his revolver up as a child holds a toy, and Brookwell grabbed it.

"Shot him! What for?"

"Oh, yes, it's all right; I've reasoned it all out."

"He's not dead!" said Brookwell half to himself as he quickly bent to the old man.

"Oh, no," whined Boyard; "but he won't be long now. I'm waiting."

"Come with me!" Brookwell commanded, and took Boyard's arm. He



looked at the poor fellow's face, the restless eyes and mouth and twitching nostrils, and pity stung him. "You can't stop here another instant. Come with me!" And Boyard went with him like a lamb.

The only thing in the street was a cab, and they waited till it came up to them. The dusk was falling thickly, so that the few passers-by saw nothing peculiar.

He gave the cabby a few shillings.

"Go up to Doctor Lawrence's hospital—he'll be at dinner now—and tell him the owner of that card is seriously hurt, and bring the doctor back here. It's worth what you like if you're quick."

"Come on," Brookwell commanded the creature at his side, and dragged him back to Critchley's office. He bathed the wounded man's head, and he swore it was a fortnight before the cab galloped back with the doctor.

The doctor stooped over the old man. "The bullet's in his shoulder," he said. "He's quite unconscious, but not in great danger."

"Can you take Mr. Critchley back to your hospital at once and fix him up?" asked Brookwell.

"Yes. Are you coming?"

"No. I want to mind that fellow." Brookwell nodded toward Boyard. For the first time the doctor's eye fell on Boyard, and Brookwell stopped his tongue with a look and a raised hand.

When Brookwell heard the wheels rattle away he turned his attention to the madman. Boyard followed Brookwell to the police station, where he was formally given in charge—nothing else could be done.

Brookwell sent a messenger to Lena Critchley to inform her that her father was delayed in town, and that he would be out and explain later in the evening. Then he went home to a late dinner.

In a short time word reached him that the injured man was dead.

### III

THE matter of the murder, considering the circumstances and the undoubted

insanity of the perpetrator, died out. But something remained.

John Critchley had set his heart on a marriage between Lena and Norman Boyard, so that they could marry and live in the house with him as before, and minister to his loneliness. He also knew that his daughter was very free with money. Boyard was a decidedly steady fellow, therefore Critchley made up his mind for the marriage and made his will accordingly. All his money went to Boyard, his wife and his heirs, imagining of course that Boyard's heirs would be his own grandchildren.

The great fact was that the will had not been altered after Boyard went away with the strange woman, because Brookwell, who knew everything except the affair of the will, had kept the old man ignorant of the full story in an endeavor, encouraged by the daughter, to save the old man's feelings and Boyard's reputation.

Brookwell saw now that by doing this he had practically disinherited the man's daughter, and had subsidized the woman who with her fatherless children had wrecked Boyard's life.

Brookwell knew that Lena liked him, and he had an idea that he loved the girl in return, and he also knew that Anyson loved her with all the depth of his simple good nature. Anyson had money, and no aims in life that would interfere with their domestic happiness. Therefore Brookwell decided that he must urge Lena to marry Anyson.

And there were other things to do.

At the office of the lawyer, Mr. Alwyn P. Full, in Melbourne, he made arrangements to meet the objectionable Mrs. Norman Boyard. Full and Brookwell were the executors named in the will, and their difficulties were enlarged by the fact that the only beneficiary was a lunatic.

Though Brookwell's heart was a tender one, he hated this woman before he set eyes on her. When she told her story he was not so hard.

"I ain't proud of myself," she said, "nor nothing like it—but I was wrecked before I was born."

"But why did you plot to ruin Boyard?"

"I never plotted. He said he'd marry me, and although lots of men had said that before, I knew Norman meant it. And it seemed to me like the end of all my worries. But it wasn't, though—he seemed to change awful," she added simply.

The lawyer ran through a pile of papers and began slowly, looking firmly at the woman:

"As you are aware, your husband is sole beneficiary in the will of the late John Critchley, of Melbourne. The legatee was found to be of unsound mind and was ordered to be confined in an asylum during His Majesty's pleasure, and as is usual in such cases, his affairs were ordered to be managed by a committee consisting of Mr. Brookwell and myself. You, as the legal wife of Norman Boyard, are to receive a sufficient sum at regular intervals for the maintenance of yourself and your children.

"The children are to be immediately released from the institution where they are now," continued the lawyer. "On the death of your husband, the property may revert to the Crown, or your remittance may continue or discontinue according to the decision of the committee, which will consider the manner of your life and behavior from this date and use their powers accordingly."

"I tell you before God," the woman broke out, "I'll keep square now! I only did it—"

Full raised a silencing hand, but the woman went on.

"He nearly killed me one morning," she cried. "He was mad when I married him—and so was I! It's easy for you men to talk, sitting in fancy offices all day—you don't know what the world's like to a solitary woman." She broke down in tears.

The interview was over, and the woman departed.

There was still another problem to face. Brookwell felt that he was obliged to make Lena marry Anyson for her own sake. Now that she was penniless, his

promise to plead Victor's cause had a double meaning and force.

#### IV

BROOKWELL was a man with a will of his own. He had mapped out his life as he wanted it. Ostensibly there was no woman in the plan, but a vision of Lena Critchley, whose friend he had been for many years, had for some time troubled his affected indifference of manner; though he had practically taken vows of poverty and devotion to his art.

Then came the announcement of old John Critchley's blunder, diverting what wealth the old man had into a channel unnatural and impure, to leave his daughter penniless. So Brookwell coldly decided that for her own sake Lena Critchley must marry Victor Anyson.

Since her father's death the girl was alone in the world, and for the time being she was living in the country with an aunt. So Brookwell came one day to her aunt's house at Warburton to lay siege to her heart in the name of Anyson as he had promised long before, and she met his advances coldly.

"Why can't Victor come himself? Why do you come here with all your silly nonsense?" she asked, as he straightforwardly gave her the reason of his coming.

"Victor thought my winning manner and my excellent courage and address might do me some honor and him a little advantage. And as I am speaking to you for your own good—"

"Oh!" said Lena.

"It's no use 'oh-ing' at me, Lena; I know that the happiness of you two depends on it."

"And what of *you*? Why do you bring your valuable time and oratory to this purpose?"

"Because, my dear, as I have so often told you, beneath my rough and forbidding exterior I am a man of gold. To do good is my religion; to love mankind is my passion. I am quite aware that you would rather marry me than Victor—but I don't want you. Re-

member your father's will and my poverty. My life is devoted to the 'arts,' as Bramwell calls it."

"You can be a frightful fool when you like!" said Lena sharply. "There is a time for nonsense, but this is not it, Arthur, and you know it."

"How do I know?" said he.

Lena rushed toward the door to get out of the room before the tears came. But he was there before her and caught her in his arms. She knew the sort of man Brookwell was, and rested against him contentedly and cried like a baby, while he looked down at her in a half-amused way.

"You know well enough that it is you I want," she said.

"I know well enough that I am all the world to you—you have said it so often. But it means practically nothing."

"Then why need you ridicule me?"

"Because," and the tone of whimsical earnestness which she knew and loved came into his voice—"because, my dear, if I didn't joke and act the fool I would blubber as you are doing now!"

"And yet you do not want me?"

"And yet I do not want you."

"If I laid myself out to win you—"

"I should not even be a friend of yours then. If you schemed for me as women do, fanned my admiration of you to a wild passion, I might marry you for the moment; but my life, after all, would be elsewhere. I might hate you, if a man could really hate what loved him."

"And you want to toss me over to Victor?"

"Toss?" he said sharply. "I am doing no tossing. I never had you to toss."

"Then perhaps you have a pretty poetic word for it," she said.

He took her by the wrists and said vehemently: "I know you value my opinion and my advice, and I tell you that there is no man on earth who will make you happier than Victor will, and he is dying for the chance. I am of absolutely no use to you, so get me out of your head."

"No use!" she exclaimed.

"I prefer to be of no use."

"Then you do not want me?"

"I want to be as we have always been,

and so far in my life I have always had what I wanted."

"Oh, my philosopher!" Her voice failed her and she sobbed again.

"Do you love me enough," she heard him saying in a firm voice—"do you love me enough to do what I say when I point a direction not wholly distasteful? Victor was good enough for you at one time. Will you marry Victor?"

She stroked his face and smiled in tears.

"Oh, what hard hearts you poets have!"

"Do you love me enough to do as I say?"

"I love you too well to be denied you—even by yourself!"

"But will you do as I say?"

His eyes were firm on her lovely upturned face, and they stood in as close communion as any lovers could stand.

"Do you really wish it?" she asked again.

"I wish it," he said.

"But I love you! Arthur, Arthur, I love you!"

"Prove it!" he said.

"Kiss me and lock my heart against you forever—oh, my boy!"

"Will you marry Victor?"

"If you are not far away—if you do not leave us—I may— Kiss me, Arthur!"

"Say that you will!"

"I will say it and mean it if you will kiss me now."

He kissed her—and that was heaven.

As Anyson said afterward—"this was a damn funny way to do things." But Brookwell knew himself to be the usurper. Anyson had loved Lena before either Lena or himself had become acquainted with Brookwell. They had grown up together at school. Then came Norman Boyard, who got no love from Lena, but disturbed things somewhat by his erratic lovemaking—ardent yet bashful. After that came Brookwell.

Brookwell, to Anyson, was a sort of clowning good fellow with some little grains of wheat among the chaff, and an indispensable friend. But Lena Critchley saw further. She saw that Brookwell

lived a life in his imagination that he dared not bring out into daylight. She knew he had great ideals which he secretly fostered, but could laugh at when it suited him. And tonight he had come out of his dreams and kissed her—she had bribed him to kiss her and he was human enough to respond. But Lena was not so foolish as to imagine that she had won him from his fidelity to their friend.

They walked out on to the veranda, where the moon could be seen through the trees on the top of the hills, where they could hear the faint wind in the gums and bracken and the gurgle of the river over a fallen tree.

"And so," said Lena, pensively and half-humorously, "you would rather be a poet than my husband?"

"Certainly," he said. "As usual, I prefer the more difficult course."

"I dare say I should be hurt at your saying that."

"I dare say you should have more sense."

"I have," she said.

"How pleasant!" he replied. "But look here, Lena, I want you to understand that there is no touch of martyrdom in my situation. I wanted to do my best for Victor because I had inadvertently, as you know, spoilt his chance. People always do as I tell them, not because I tell them, but because they see that it is the wisest course. Therefore—" He paused. "I am waiting for some cruel remark about my excellent opinion of myself."

"None is needed," said Lena.

"Well, then," said Brookwell, "seeing that you have forgotten your erstwhile emotional lapse—"

"*Our*," contradicted Lena. "If you don't say '*our*' I will go into a convent, and spoil your whole game."

"I will say '*our*' or your cries will bring the fire brigade," he said. "But you won't go into a convent, my child—though you might go into hysterics."

Lena said what she really meant:

"Arthur, if you don't be careful, you will make me cry again."

"Let us, then," said Brookwell, "review the position. You don't want me

to tell you again that Victor is the right man for you, do you?"

"No," she said. "In fact, some day I might come to dislike you very much for bringing your fireworks between us."

"That is just what I say," exclaimed Brookwell, and then: "Norman *has* mixed things a bit."

"I pitied poor Norman—I could never pity you."

She uttered the last in such a significant tone that Brookwell changed ground. He really did not wish her to start love-making at him again.

"Well," he said, "I am to prepare to rejoice at your forthcoming nuptials. That is the right word, I believe—nuptials."

"Exactly."

"And you know that Victor is the right man?"

"Exactly."

"And you know that the man you love in your heart of hearts is under a moral bond not to interrupt the ceremony with deep, uncontrollable sobs?"

"Exactly."

"My wise little woman, I will bid you good night," said Brookwell, and he went inside the house, leaving Lena to watch the moonlight alone.

"I wish," he said to Anyson with a touch of despondency, "that my aim in life were as close to my grasp as yours. Here you are with your silly heart satisfied, while all my gigantic enterprises in art are no less gigantic and no less vague. The old man is murdered and out of it. Boyard is looking through the bars of a cage in Yarra Bend. The woman who caused all this trouble has been accidentally and liberally pensioned off for her sins and, I believe, has taken the preliminary steps on what they call the upward path. And I—I am pushing the same old barrow, selling the same old bananas."

"And what," said Anyson, "is the moral of all this?"

"Moral!" said Brookwell. "It is a piece of life, and there is no moral."

"Still, I flatter myself I have managed things rather well," he said to himself.



# MARIE

By Evelyn Gill Klahr

This story concerns something that has given women more worry than any one thing except dress. That is the problem of servants. The author of this story presents here the servants' side of the question, which every employer of domestic help should study and attempt to understand.

**B**EYOND question she made more work for the others, but she did liven things up quite considerably, which is pretty important when you are twenty minutes out of the city and have only one afternoon a week. Maggie, the upstairs girl, cleaned the silver for her half the time, and Eliza, the cook, did up the luncheon doilies, which she had never done for any other waitress in her life. And all they got in return was her eternal nonsense, her eternal "cuttin' up," as Eliza called it.

Marie was young, barely nineteen, perhaps not pretty but with the supreme gift of appearing so. Even the two somewhat dull, grown-up sons of Mrs. Buffington had watched her at first with a faint interest and had inquired, "Where did you draw the looker, mom?"

And she was buoyant. Life had not yet deprived her of that abundant, undirected surplus of energy called youth. She had a way of dashing into the kitchen and snatching Eliza from her cooking just when the croquettes were at a critical stage, whirling her twice around the room in spite of Eliza's protesting gasps: "You — M'rie — quit your— Oh, my glory! You young devil!" and then replacing her before the stove just in time to save the croquettes from burning.

She taught Maggie how to do up her hair so her ears wouldn't show, and even tried to coax her stiff lathlike legs into the steps of the maxixe or the tango.

Timothy, the gardener, used to find all manner of excuses to come to the kitchen when he knew Marie was there, and the very sight of the impudent young thing was enough, every time, to set him laughing.

But she was at her worst in the evenings when Eliza joined them for a bedtime gossip in the room Marie and Maggie shared. Then that terrible girl was a dozen people in a half-hour: a fat Irish policeman, or Timothy the gardener, or a preacher in church or a small bad boy, until Maggie was worn out and gasping with her shrieks of laughter, and Eliza shook and shook and shook almost to the point of disintegration.

They called her a terror and a scatter-brain and an imp, but they wouldn't have had her leave for worlds, for she was all that made things tolerable on the days that Mrs. Buffington was at her worst.

Marie had been there only a week before that hot August day when the Buffingtons started off for a two-day breathing spell at Atlantic City. Mrs. Buffington had protested against going. She could be more comfortable in her own home, she said, and, besides, it upset all her plans, and, besides, she hadn't time, and, besides, she didn't want to go. Her husband and father insisted, and though she finally gave in she did so in a very bad humor. The servants discovered that.

She was to start at ten, and immedi-

ately after the eight o'clock breakfast she began puffing around, stout, perspiring, officious, doing no end of things that should have waited until her return, just to prove to her husband and father that she had been right when she said she was too busy to go.

First, she decided to have Mr. John's trunk taken from his room up to the storeroom, where, of course, it belonged. She ordered Marie and Timothy to take it up. She had to tell the girl twice before she seemed to understand. As a matter of fact, Marie understood the first time, but she didn't answer because she was busy counting on her fingers. She counted five: besides Timothy, there was Mr. Buffington and his two sons, John and Frank, and Mr. Landers, Mrs. Buffington's father. True, the sons were in town at their offices, but they came home every evening. Five able-bodied men in the household, and a delicately formed, nineteen-year-old girl was ordered to carry a trunk up two flights of stairs!

"I'll tell you what," she said to Timothy, when, in the storeroom, flushed and breathless, she dropped her end of the trunk, "I'll tell you what, Timmy: let's bring up the piano this afternoon just to keep in practice."

Timothy used his hand to stifle his explosion of laughter, and barely in time, too, for Mrs. Buffington came puffing and perspiring up the stairs after them, to see that they had put it in the right place.

She decided that the storeroom was too crowded, shoved some of the trunks about a little with her knees and puttered around in the corners until finally Mr. Buffington called up that the car was waiting, and wouldn't she, for heaven's sake, begin to get ready?

After she had got into her duster and her automobile bonnet, she puffed out to the kitchen for final instructions.

"You can put up the peaches while I'm gone. Timothy is going after them now. And, Eliza, I think you can move into the room with the other girls. We're going to need your room for a storeroom."

Then she turned to Maggie, trying to

remember whether she had any instructions for her, and for the first time was struck by Maggie's hair, fixed, as Marie had taught her, with the ears well concealed. Now Marie's hair fluffed and puffed over her ears, while poor Maggie's lay flat and wispy, like a none too carefully made straw mat.

Mrs. Buffington frowned her disapproval. "Maggie, I can't have you around with your hair looking like that. See that you have it fixed right by the time I get home tomorrow."

It was not a serene kitchen that she left behind her when she sailed off, and even when Timothy arrived with the two bushel baskets of peaches the ripples of displeasure she had left in her wake were still evident.

"Well, if my hair don't suit her," Maggie was announcing loudly, "she kin git someone whose hair does. I guess I don't have to stay."

She was wiping the breakfast dishes that Eliza washed, and Marie, unnaturally grave, sat on the edge of the table swinging her feet and staring thoughtfully at both of them.

"But it does seem a shame, Eliza," Marie declared, "that you've got to give up your room. I don't think that's fair for her to act as if she had a right to dump you around just as she pleases. When you came you understood you were to have a room alone."

"My good land!" sighed Eliza. "I've had lots worse. I've slep' in a room where the windows was nailed shut. I've slep' in a room oncet that was next to a stable and they was no screens an' I was like to be et up with flies if I hadn't took my own money an' bought some. An' I've slep' on mattresses that was so lumpy they made my bones ache."

There was a thoughtful little frown on Marie's brow. "It isn't right," she announced, "for them to act as if anything was good enough. They ought to see that we've got just as much right to be satisfied as they have."

"Here, you!" said Timothy, carefully selecting a peach for himself. "Stop your jawin' and get to work."

Marie stared aghast at the two bushel baskets. "Eliza dear!" she exclaimed.

"We can never in this world do all those in a day."

"Easy," Eliza assured her. "Oh, easy, child. Mrs. Buffington's all right that way. She's done her own work and she never asks more than can be done in a day. But, my land, there's some as leaves you with enough work for six and then gets ugly because you can't get it done."

"That comes of workin' fer a woman," declared Timothy.

"You don't catch me with no woman for my boss," he added.

"Why, Timmy child!" Marie reproved him. "How can you say that when you work for Mrs. Buffington same as we do?"

"I do not," Timothy denied indignantly. "I work for Mr. Buffington. He's my boss."

Marie regarded him with a puzzled frown. "Tell me, Timmy—I want to know—just why would you rather work for a man?"

Timothy squirmed. Sifting out reasons for things of which you are sure is not always easy. "Well, because I would," he said at last. "Because men don't treat you like dirt. An' because they know you're your own boss when your work's done, an' a woman thinks she's your boss all the time."

"Now, Timothy! Ain't you ashamed?" Eliza reproached him. "Who was it got you into the hospital last summer when you got typhoid an' looked after you so good till you got well?"

"Women're all right when you're sick," he retorted, "but they don't know how to treat help. That's all I got to say."

"Well, she ain't got the right to tell me how I got to do my hair," Maggie blazed away. "Places is too easy to get."

Eliza wiped out her dishpan and hung it up. "Now for them peaches," she said. "Timothy, you go an' get to work an' stop hinderin' us."

"But, Eliza," Marie insisted, "are women hard to work for? Harder'n men? Tell me. This is my first place."

"Some is an' some ain't," was Eliza's brief reply. "Now look here, M'rie, you

start peelin' them peaches while I get the syrup started, an' Maggie can bring up the glass jars."

"I've a darned good mind to go off an' leave now," snarled Maggie, as she started down the cellar stairs. "I kin show her who's got the say about my hair."

Eliza shook her head sadly as Maggie disappeared. "Now there's no need of her actin' so ugly," she said. "Don't you go an' get too thick with her, dearie. She ain't your sort. You don't find the nice girls in service you used to."

"But why don't you?" Marie demanded. "Isn't it as easy as any work? Can't you save lots more when you have no board to pay?"

"It ain't that," explained Eliza, "but the nice girls're driven out because they won't stand for bein' treated as if they weren't as good as anyone else. An' they won't stand, like Timothy said, for bein' bossed about in things that ain't got nothing to do with the work. But there used to be lovely girls in service."

Maggie came heavily up the cellar stairs, her basket of jars clinking as she climbed. Then, after the preliminary sampling of the peaches and the groan that they were "clings," the work began.

Marie peeled them, a little awkwardly and a little absent-mindedly. Eliza, fat and flushed, stood over her kettle of syrup, dropping in the peaches and then carefully taking them out one by one to go into the heated glass jars. Maggie, at the sink, tested her glass jars noisily and irritably.

"Tell me, Eliza," Marie presently requested, "do you consider this a good place?"

"As good as you'll find," Eliza told her. "You get your pay regular. The work ain't hard. And she's got a kind heart, even if she does get unreasonable sometimes."

"Just the same," declared Maggie, "you don't catch me stayin', lettin' her use me for the dirt under her feet."

"How's it come, dearie," Eliza inquired of Marie, "that you're workin' out now if you never done it before?"

"My mother wanted me to," Marie answered. "That's what she kept tellin'

me to do up to the time she died. You see, there wasn't a chance on the stage for me like she had. That's what the movies have gone and done. It was different when she was a girl. Why, I guess there isn't a one-night stand in the country that hasn't at some time or other seen mother as Nellie the Beautiful Cloak Model, or Bertha the Sewing Machine Girl. But it's different now. All the managers we knew have gone out, an' there's no way o' getting a show with the big ones."

"But the stage is an awful hard life," Eliza consoled her. "You're better out of it." (Eliza, whose entire knowledge of the stage consisted in one performance of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," seen in her youth, and the circus!)

"M-m-mm," mused Marie. "Yes and no. Of course if you're on the stage you lose out on home life. That's why mother wanted me to do housework. 'Homes are a woman's job,' she used to say. 'And the quicker you get onto your job the better.'"

Marie's blue eyes grew dark with reminiscent tenderness. "Poor mom!" she sighed. "She never had much chance at a home. There's no use talking, you can't rightly keep house on railroad trains and in hotels. That's why she wanted me to go into housework, so I'd have a good home and at the same time learn to run one of my own. A lady friend of hers who's got an employment bureau taught me how to be a waitress, and got me this job."

After that she fell into a reverie over her peaches: this is what her mother had deemed best for her, light work in a good household. And here she was in one that Eliza, experienced hand, pronounced one of the best. And yet, that very day, in this one of the best, she, a young girl of nineteen, had been ordered to carry a trunk up two flights of stairs; Eliza had been told to give up her room to trunks and to move into another room that already had two occupants; Maggie was denied even the privilege of arranging her hair as she saw fit. Timothy said all this was because they had a woman for their employer. And yet even Timothy could not deny

that women had the best hearts in the world. These were the things she puzzled over.

The day advanced in a fashion far from exhilarating. The heat was the close sticky heat of August; the work grew more and more tedious and the odor of the peaches a little oppressive. Save for Maggie's half-mumbled scolding like the threatening of a smouldering volcano, the three fell into a silence that lasted even through their simple noon-day meal and until the work was finished in the late afternoon.

Then when the parings were removed and the kettles washed and put away, Marie stood admiringly before the table of glass jars filled with deep yellow perfect halves of peaches in their thick crystal syrup.

"Oh, the dear things!" cried Marie. Then, with a quick rebound of spirits, her old gaiety came back. "Why, we've been old grumps all day," she cried. "And it's my fault, too, for talking about such solemn things."

She pinched Eliza's fat cheek, and then caught Maggie about the waist and swung her around. Their spirits, however, did not rebound as easily as did hers.

She tied a tea towel around her head and another around her hips and did them an Oriental dance. But still their smiles were only indifferent.

Marie looked them over thoughtfully and then slipped upstairs.

Later when Eliza and Maggie went up for a little rest and freshening up before getting the evening meal, they did not see her, nor did she turn up to help with the preparation of the meal.

"She's up to some of her divilment, like as not," predicted Eliza.

It was when the potatoes yielded to the prod of the steel fork and supper was nearly ready that the astonishing thing happened. Mrs. Buffington had said positively that she would not be back until the next day, and yet her voice called them from the dining room, called them both: "Eliza—Maggie—Eliza!"

They exchanged glances of dumb amazement and then obeyed her summons; Eliza first, heavily, and Maggie



behind her, trying with nervous fingers to pin up the hair from over her ears.

She stood at the head of the table, her back to the light. She wore a blue house dress that she often wore in the morning.

"We came back earlier than we expected," she said. "Get me some supper at once—some fried chicken and an ice."

"But there ain't any"—Eliza began.

Maggie interrupted her with an uproarious shriek. "It's Marie! Can't you see, Eliza? It's Marie!"

Eliza felt an awful doubt. Suppose it wasn't? If only she'd laugh or smile like Marie instead of standing there staring at them in Mrs. Buffington's most awful manner!

The object of her doubt seated herself at Mrs. Buffington's place, her back to the hall door. "I wish to speak with Timothy," she announced.

Of course it was Marie. Of course! But oh, there was all the feel of Mrs. Buffington about her. It was Mrs. Buffington's hair and eyebrows and her dress and her voice and her figure and even, unbelievably, her double chin. Eliza could no more have spoken disrespectfully to it than she could have to Mrs. Buffington herself.

And even Timothy, prepared by Maggie's hysterical summons for another of Marie's pranks, was taken aback at the sight of her and grew very sober. Even when Maggie assured him, he felt the same uneasiness that Eliza had felt.

"Timothy," said the apparition sharply, "you and Marie may move the kitchen stove up to the storeroom so that it will be out of the way while Eliza sweeps the kitchen. And by the way, Eliza, I've decided you can sleep in the storeroom just as well as in your own room. You'll find the trunks perfectly comfortable. And Maggie—Maggie, I don't consider it necessary for you to have hair. A girl looks much neater without. See that you have yours shaved off before I see you again."

They were howling with mirth over her until Eliza suddenly attracted their attention with a queer choking sound, not the sound of mirth in its extremities,

but rather of desperation, like the sound of a strangling person. Her eyes, glassy with horror, were fixed on the open door behind Marie.

Maggie and Timothy followed the direction of Eliza's eyes, and they, too, stood staring, frozen with horror.

Marie did not turn, but it was as if the whole part of her toward the door had suddenly become a mammoth eye to see what they saw.

She reached out and carefully changed the position of the bowl of flowers in the middle of the table. "I've changed my mind, Maggie," she said; "you needn't shave your hair."

Then she rose and turned bravely to face what must be faced.

It is curious that the Buffingtons had actually done what the travesty of Mrs. Buffington had said: they had come back a whole day early. They had, moreover, entered the hall just as Timothy had entered the dining room, and had seen and heard everything.

With them was a friend, a middle-aged man who tactfully stood a little back from the others, considerate of his host and hostess in their awkward situation, and yet unable to take his fascinated eyes from the false Mrs. Buffington.

Mr. Buffington stood staring in utter amazement. Mrs. Buffington, almost bursting with incipient hysterics, violence and rage, stood facing her double, so like herself in face and figure and pose that she dared not say the things she wanted to say. How could she submit this that was almost herself to the indignities that were on her tongue?

So she sailed up to her own room and left the task of dismissal to her husband.

He joined his guest on the veranda for a moment before going to his unpleasant duty.

"I'll be hanged, Matthews," he scolded, "if I see why women are always having trouble with their servants. I've kept the same gardener for five years and the men in my office for longer than that."

"I can see," said Matthews—he was stage manager Matthews—"that she would be perfectly impossible as a ser-

vant, but if I'm not mistaken she has the makings of a blamed good actress. Would you be willing for me to see her for a minute or so when you've finished?"

Although Marie had washed off much of the make-up which her mother's old box had furnished her, there were still enough hints about her darkened eyebrows and her lined mouth to suggest his wife; so Mr. Buffington was glad to make the interview as short as possible and send her out to his guest.

"Since you are leaving this place," said Matthews, "I was wondering if I might not be able to help you."

There were things that she had to get off her mind first.

"It was a rotten mean shame of me

to go taking her clothes and make fun of her like that, but I only thought of cheering up the girls."

Matthews smiled to himself, the comfortable, pleasant smile of one who knows he has it in his power to be fate. "How would you like to make a business of cheering up?" he inquired.

She looked at him with questioning eyes.

"The stage," he explained. "I can give you a chance."

She looked his gift horse in the mouth. She puckered her brows and considered and weighed and remembered and wondered. Finally she tossed it away with a single shake of her head. "I'm going to stick at this somehow," she said. "Homes are a woman's job."



## PREMIÈRE DANSEUSE

By Fanny Hodges Newman

**B**LUE as the Danube leaps the flame,  
Sorcerer fires, *one-two, one-two,*  
Calling with tongues my name, my name;  
Ardors of old that thrill me through.

Call of the boughs asway, asway,  
Call of the bending blades of wheat,  
Drag of the stars away, away;  
Ah, here am I with answering feet!

Dance with me, winds that rock the sea,  
I am a wave across the deep;  
Blow sweet amours and dandle me,  
Far in some glamorous cave, to sleep.

Dance with me, lilies, lilies tall,  
Purple and gold and white as milk;  
Motion is life and rhythm is all;  
Come and caress me, hands of silk.

Here to me, roses, roses red!  
Pour me your fervid wine tonight;  
Die of the gift, and leave me dead,  
Ebbd with the music's last delight.

## OUR NEXT NUMBER

Being a Yet-To-Be-Published Editorial Announcement Regarding an Issue of One of Our Popular Magazines.\*

By George Jean Nathan

ONE of the leading features of the next number of our magazine will not be the beginning of "a remarkable new serial unfolding the powerful and dramatic story of the conflict between a woman's passionate devotion to a career and the claims of love." This wonderful serial was not obtained by us only after great difficulty, as our editors experienced no little trouble in convincing themselves (even after a perusal of the first few pages of the manuscript) that here at last was a contribution that did not strike a new note in American fiction. In the place of this serial, we take pardonable pride in announcing a rare treat for our readers—a serial story from which the two following startling features will be absent:

1. An installment ending at the point where: "She hesitated, wondering whether, after all, she should take this step—this step that meant all, everything—this step of complete surrender. He moved toward her and—she found herself suddenly caught in his strong arms. Her senses swam. The room, the world, everything faded from her. She knew only that he was close, so very close—and that she loved him with soul and body. 'Well, darling?' he asked presently. It seemed years to her before she could summon the answer to her moist and trembling lips, years in which she saw again her girlhood home, her happy schooldays, her— Then, at length, he felt her soft, fragrant breath take form against his cheek. 'I will go with you,' she whispered. Her eyes dropped. 'And be yours,' she finished."

2. The next month's installment beginning with: "No sooner had she spoken than she realized her mistake. 'I cannot go with you—I cannot go with you!' she cried. '*I cannot be yours!*'"

¶Another novel feature of our next number will be the absence of an editorial announcement announcing for the number after that a story by an author who is not only not greater than Balzac or Robert Louis Stevenson but is not even the greatest short story writer in America today.

¶Among the short fiction in our next number (which in many ways will probably not be the finest number we have ever published) will be a story of "love and adventure" in which, however, the hero, during his college days, pulled some other oar than stroke on the Yale crew and for which we have not commissioned an artist to draw a picture showing the heroine lying back in a steamer chair with the hero, in the next chair, bending over toward her. Another feature of this truly remarkable story, which will not be the first of a series of six by the same author, will be the presence in no part of it of the following passage: "How wonderful a dream, dear heart—just we two—we two alone—away from all this ugliness, away from all this hateful, noisy, gray-and-brown world. Close your eyes and think of Cassicara, sweetheart—of the Mediterranean lazy under the warm, blue, drowsy April skies—of the little garden at Aux Truffes sleeping in the moonlight—of the roses . . ."

\*Which is probably why they're popular.

¶Among the other good things that we will not print in our next number will be the celebrated story "dealing with the greatest human problem of our time," the celebrated uplift story that points out the great soul peace and content that come to one after years of struggle in the sordid city when one "gives it all up—this selfishness, this hollow striving, this artificiality, *et cetera*"—and goes to live in the country, and the celebrated story about "a new kind of detective." We promise our readers a further treat in the absence from our next number of a story "that will more than confirm the judgment of all who recognized in the author of the story published in our May issue a writer of exceptional power." We also do not announce the thrilling and baffling mystery story telling of a strange episode in the lives of two brothers who marvelously resemble each other.

¶Our dramatic department next month will be particularly noteworthy. It will contain only five references to Forbes Robertson's wonderful speaking voice. Another big feature of the department will be the absence of a derogatory flippant allusion to the Ziegfeld "Pollies." Our department of book reviews will be equally interesting. In reviewing a book of John Masefield's poems, our critic will refrain from observing that Masefield was sailing before the mast when he was fourteen, and ten years ago was rinsing out glasses in a Sixth Avenue saloon in New York. There will, furthermore, be a mention of Robert Service's name without the name of Rudyard Kipling showing up in the same paragraph, and also the review of a novel containing a bizarre, whimsical hero who is nevertheless not likened to one of W. J. Locke's. Also a reference to Locke without the tag: "Mr. Locke's characters are always engaging but they are not quite real flesh and blood."

¶Our next number, contrary to our established policy, will not contain the following poem:

Not by the measure of his deed  
Does life make trial of man's strength;  
Not by his wisdom, nor his creed,  
Nor yet by his compassion's length.

Not by his span of worldly power,  
Not even what his truth might dare;  
But, 'prisoned in his darkest hour,  
By how much he can bravely bear!

¶A rare artistic treat is in store for our readers in our next number. We have eliminated all illustrations.

¶But the foregoing are not the only good things we are promising. For instance, in our next number we are not publishing a story by "a newly discovered writer possessed of an unmistakable genius for character drawing," a statement that generally means nothing more than that the magazine cut down editorial expenses for that number by buying a perfectly unimportant story by an unknown man for thirty-seven dollars and, through the printing of the boost, seeks to delude its readers into believing the story is better than it is. In addition, we take pleasure in not announcing an important article on the drama entitled "Shakespearean Actresses With Whom I Have Eaten Lunch," by William Winter.

¶The announcement of the most important feature in our next number, however, we have reserved as a climax. It is our honest belief that the publication of this feature will prove to be the most sensational and talked-of magazine achievement of the decade. We have spent time, pains and money to obtain this epoch-making contribution, a contribution which is certain to be widely discussed wherever there are persons who read the English language. This feature, which will positively appear in our next number, is nothing less remarkable than a story by Richard Harding Davis in which the hero

NEEDS A SHAVE!!!

¶On all newsstands—several days late.



# AN AFRICAN EPIC

By Donn Byrne

THROUGH the open door of the dressing room the shouting at the ringside could be heard distinctly. The preliminaries had been excellent. The middleweight bout had been a marked success. At that moment the lightweight champion of Bloemfontein and the Enniskillen Dragoon were battling the eighth round of a spite fight, and the hypercritical audience of diamond merchants, soldiers and miners were shrieking themselves hoarse at a rally.

It was by far the best card that had ever been staged in Africa, but the titbit of the evening was still forthcoming. Frank Selby, the big negro who had risen like a comet in the Cape Town ring, had challenged Jim Muller for the heavyweight championship of the continent, and the men were to go twenty rounds that night.

Muller sat in his dressing room listening to the advice of his trainer. As yet the negro was too much of an unknown quantity to occasion Muller and his training stable any serious qualms. But they had been pretty careful. The champion, with Dutch caution, had trained to a hair. Besides, it was the first time in his ring career he had ever met a black fighter.

Until now he had always drawn a rigid color line. The blood of the old Dutch pioneers, who had hurled the Matabele and the Mashona back from Table Mountain, rebelled at the thought of matching brawn and skill with blacks. But things had grown dull in the fight game. An astute manager had traded on the sensational value of a black and white match, and offered the biggest purse in Africa ring history, and Jim

Muller and his manager had accepted. After all, knocking out a black could only make him the more popular in Kimberley.

But here in the dressing room, as his hands were being bandaged, the matter did not appear so simple at all. The old Dutch trekkers, whose life had been one struggle against the black spearmen from the north, and who had learned their diabolical cunning and had shot the blacks on sight, woke up in him and, for the first time in his life, he began to have misgivings as to the outcome of a match.

It was ridiculous, of course. Here was he, Jim Muller, six feet two, one hundred and ninety pounds, in the pink of condition; the champion of Africa, one of the cleverest boxers in the empire, surrounded by skilled seconds. Somewhere in the back of the club, this fetid black was undressing, surrounded by filthy helpers, hangers-on in dives, wharfingers, God-knows-what scum. Fellows of the type of his opponent removed his shoes, pulled his rickshaw, did all menial services for him. A moment's spar, a feint, a right hook and the bout would be over.

Still and all, he'd rather he hadn't taken it on.

Outside, the dragoon and the pride of the Free State were making the most of the minute's respite between rounds. The comments of the spectators were like the buzzing of an enormous swarm of bees. Above it could be heard the raucous cries of peanut sellers and the voice of the announcer calling the round.

Then silence for a moment, and thunderous shouting. Muller knew what had happened. One of the men had

gone weak, and the other was finishing him. Another spell of silence and the timekeeper began counting. A second slipped out of the room and came back. "The Enniskillen's out," he said. "We're next."

The crowd outside was satisfied. The fight had gone twelve rounds, with action in every second. And the home man had won. The star bout was on next. Apart from its championship attraction, it was between black and white heavyweights, and one of the contestants was their own Jim Muller, of Kimberley. Black and white boxers had clashed frequently before the club, but never such important figures in the fancy as tonight. And certainly until tonight no negro in Africa had aspired to the championship.

Up and down the aisles went peanut sellers, sandwich boys, paper boys and men with soda water baskets, all calling their wares. One of the club stewards climbed into the ring and began covering the blood stains with sawdust. Another shook resin at the corners. From the gallery and pit came the monotonous chant of the bookmakers. The odds were three to one against the black.

As Muller appeared on his way to the ring, the packed hall rose to its feet and cheered as one man. The shout was taken up by the thousands standing outside the club in the drizzling rain and was reëchoed through Kimberley. It was the champion's first appearance in the ring since he had put away Tom Jennings, the Australian heavyweight, seven months before, and the thirteen rounds of that terrific grueling mill were still fresh in the spectators' minds.

Overhead the big incandescent arc-light spluttered and flared. All the old fight followers of Kimberley were present. At the ringside he could distinguish mining magnates, colonial officials, boxers and their managers. There was old General Baines, who had never missed a fight in forty years, with double glasses on his nose, propped up by cushions in his seat. There was the civil governor and the colonel of the Rifles. Even from the jaded press table there

came a volley of clapping. It was certainly Muller's house.

But in spite of all, there was no feeling of elation in him in response to the welcome. He had been overtrained, he thought. Yes, that was it. He had been overtrained. He turned on his seconds with a snarl.

Picking their way down the aisle came the negro fighter and his seconds. The flaring hues of his dressing gown were distinguishable even far beyond the circle of the arclight's glare. There was no clapping for him, no cheering, no welcome. The crowd was not even inimical to him. They had the same dispassionate feeling as they would have had for a covey of birds beaten up for the guns.

There was no choice of corners or gloves for him. His seconds took what they got. Had Muller felt like fighting with bare knuckles, they wouldn't have dared dispute. They were a quiet, workmanlike, undemonstrative quartet, grouped around the impassive bulk of the huge challenger in the corner.

Bandages had been examined. Gloves were tugged on. The puffy Scotch doctor, with his stethoscope, had clambered in and out of the ring. The club announcer was shouting the length and conditions of the fight and introducing challengers. Occasionally a burst of handclapping would break out like the crackle of rifles. White-sweated seconds flitted around the posts, arranging smelling salts, water, sponges and towels.

And in Jim Muller's mind the scene took on the proportions of an ancient masque. There was no more of the sordid details of the prize ring. There was a jousting of humanity. It was no longer a twenty-round bout between hired pugs. It was no longer even a championship at stake. It was a struggle of strength between the attacking white and the resisting black, between the hordes who had come journeying over the sea and the natives to whom they grudged even the wilderness.

Had Muller been the scum of the dive, the fighter of the pothouse, the low-browed, dull-witted atavistic plug-ugly, fighting with brute strength and

low cunning, this phase would never have occurred to him. But he was a son of the veldt, tanned by the breezes of Africa, a descendant of the old Amsterdam burghers who had fought their way inward inch by inch into the country against the battling Zulus. They had relied on bullets and powder and strategy for their success, but their descendant must defend himself tonight with elemental brawn.

And it filtered into Muller's mind, thought by thought, that it was a battle of races and of continents he must fight. He stood for the race that filled the hall and the town, and that was eternally inspanning on the trail northward, and for forgotten graves on the veldt, and for brave dead companies ambushed by Zulu impiis.

And the battle he would fight tonight in a twenty-foot ring with gloves should have been fought by armies of hundreds of thousands, and iron behemoths on the high seas, and batteries shooting from hill to hill.

The last of the challengers had been introduced and the referee was clambering through the ropes. He was the editor of a famous sporting weekly, and his black frock coat, bowed back, white mustache and benevolent features looked out of place in the prize ring. He looked like the officiating priest at the ceremony of an antique religion.

The men had come together into the middle of the ring for the final instructions. The black fighter had thrown aside his dressing gown and stood up, a huge, swift-moving figure with shaven head and a bull neck. Under the champion's bathrobe the crowd caught white flashes of skin. He had little healthy hollows on his tanned cheeks and his hair was beginning to thin prematurely at the temples.

The crowd was too interested to talk. They craned forward toward the black fighter and the white-mustached referee and the tall, lithe figure of the champion. The hush was broken only by the clatter of telegraph keys.

Muller had underrated his man. He knew it. He noticed the enormous barrel of chest, the deep welt of muscle

on the shoulders. He noticed the soft look of the biceps that promised to send home punches like darts of lightning, and the slender, well knit legs that could move like a flash.

And, moreover, he noticed the negro's eye. It was keen as a Kukri knife. There was none of the shiftiness that marked the debased Kafirs. It was an eye that had looked over rolling hills and followed the flight of hawks. This was none of the degenerate hangers-on of the "coke" dives of Cape Town. This was the type that fought Leopold's men on the Congo until the oily Belgians had enlisted in their aid the Maxim and the Hotchkiss and the river gunboat. And then that type retired to the unblazed forests of the interior, and were waiting there patiently for a day to come.

More and more convinced Muller became that this was a tournament of races, and he felt that only his superior knowledge of the game would pull him through.

The referee had finished his monotonous instruction and the men had retired to their corners. The bookmakers raised their voices in a frenzy to make the most of the last minute before the fight began. The negro was sitting impassive as ever in his corner. Muller waxed his shoes carefully on the resin board.

The seconds were ordered from the ring. There was a sort of surge over the house as the spectators settled themselves in their seats. The gong gave out a reverberant brazen trill, and the fight was on.

Muller had somehow expected his opponent to rush from his corner at the bell and try to sweep him from his feet with a storm of hooks and swings. Instead, he was circling around with a barely perceptible movement, slightly crouched forward, the brown gloves at the end of the glistening forearms sawing the air, or flicking in and out in a feint, or ready to block the smashing left lead that Muller would sooner or later let go.

But the point of the black chin was never left unguarded a moment, and the black arm flitted to and fro over the

ribs where Muller would follow up with his murderous right hand drive.

For a tenth of a second the champion got his opening. He jumped in with vicious right and left swings from the hips. The negro covered up and clinched, and the ropes creaked under the impact of the wrestling bodies.

But in that brief lead and clinch Muller knew he had met a consummate ring general. Then the bell clanged.

The spectators had no angle on the fight from the first round. That spring of Muller's had failed to crumple up his opponent and they felt more than relieved. Jim had a habit of finishing his man in a round or two, of which they heartily approved but which they didn't very much enjoy. They liked a good smashing fight, with a little claret on tap. They liked to see a tottering man last the round out. They liked to be brought to their feet by a slashing rally. They liked to see a clean *coup-de-grâce* administered to the staggering loser. A knockout was timely from the seventeenth round onward, but fifteen shillings was too much for a moment's spar, a left lead, a right uppercut and a huddled figure on the canvas.

As Muller rose for the second round, his jaw was tucked a little closer to his shoulder and his left hand was thrust forward a little more carefully. The ducking and blocking of his swings in the first round had taught him that he wasn't in for a sparring exhibition, but a fight in which he had to bring forth all his cunning and caution and husband every ounce of strength for the last rounds.

A brief fence, a flutter of flying gloves, a clinch, and the men broke away. A few light passes to the head and face, and the champion drove home with the right. It caught the black clean under the ribs. A quick feint, a left hook, and the champion's right went out again. This time it didn't go home.

Rapid lefts and rights in the third round. A few hooks and swings ducked and blocked. The men were warming up. The boards creaked under the shuffling feet. The gloves met with little explosive noises. Punches went

home with sharp resonant cracks. The ringside was leaning forward with necks craned. Breaths were taken in over the house with a sound like the hissing of a small furnace.

Muller didn't like the frequency with which that left hand was shooting into his face. And he didn't like the weight of the black fighter in the clinches, or the sharp tattoo of the kidney punch, or the ease with which he was swung around when their arms locked.

He knew the black was playing a waiting game, playing to cut him up and tire and weaken him. But he thought of a white lager in the up-country, and the patient waiting of ambushed blacks through the daytime, and through the evening, and into the night, and he pictured the irresistible, victorious rush just before dawn.

There was a little lump under his right eye where that shooting left had gone home, and his lips were beginning to swell, and there was an angry red blotch on his back and side where the kidney punch was doing its work. His seconds glanced curiously at him when he walked to his corner at the bell.

In the eighth round he rushed in swinging both hands heavily. The black rammed home a vicious right uppercut as he came. For a second the hall became an unmeasurable black void and the blazing arclight a tiny glimmer in the darkness. He managed to clinch and hold on until his head cleared and, by clever footwork and a long left jab, saved himself until the gong called the end of the round.

Between the rounds the house was now a Babel. It hummed like a nest of hornets. The men at the ringside sat very still and white-faced. In Muller's corner the seconds worked like fiends. The towels flapped like gunshots in the hands of the helpers. Water splashed from the corner onto the shirt fronts of the spectators. And the spectators made no grumble.

The canvas was now spattered with blood, red with the drops from this bout and brown where the sawdust had been kicked away from the old stains. Muller's eye was beginning to close un-



der the blue lump, and his mouth was swollen purple. A cut on the left shoulder was numbing the arm bit by bit. His knees had begun to sag ever so little.

How the black was he couldn't tell. No bruises appeared under that glistening skin. Muller was depending on swinging circular blows, hooks, jolts and swings, punches that might connect with nerve centers and end the fight then and there. The negro relied upon the repeated jabbing that cut and bruised, and that brought weakness and stupor in the end.

The house was shrieking to the champion to rush in and fight, to risk all in one smashing attack, but Muller remembered the uppercut in the eighth round, and knew the mettle of the man against him. His strength and skill were his in trust and he must conserve them. He was fighting Armageddon and every blow must count.

The house didn't know yet. They thought their champion was off color, was not in the vein. It never occurred to them for a moment that he might be beaten. They felt he must win in the long run, but they changed their viewpoint about the length of the bout, and wondered why he took so long to finish it. They were beginning to be somewhat disappointed in Jim Muller.

The bookmakers were in a frenzy. Right and left they were offering even money. The news trickled down to the ringside and into Muller's corner. He had forgotten about the prize money that was his, win or lose. He had forgotten his side stakes. He forgot all but the huge iron figure he must beat for the sake of his own people.

The long-range flicking lefts were less frequent now. The black was handing out quick swinging hooks and jarring uppercuts. He was taking more of a chance. But never for a moment did he grow reckless. At any instant the champion's hand might cross to his jaw with that crashing triphammer punch that had ended the ring career of Frank "Pug" Murphy, and of Cyclone Kennedy, and had taken his title from the old champion in the twentieth round.

But Muller could never send over that punch now. The spring that would

put his whole body behind a blow had gone out of his legs. His arms were growing heavier. His breath came and went in quick gasps. It was only the long discipline of ring punishment that kept him up under the never ceasing volley of rights and lefts; only the hard road training kept his legs from faltering under him, and the routine of the punching bag guided his hands.

In the twelfth round he led with a swing for the head and missed. He fumbled for the ropes and held on to them to steady himself for an instant. And in that instant the house knew he was a beaten man.

They sat very still at first, very still and stricken. It looked like an absurd joke, a prank a child might play. Then it broke in on them, and the house went mad. Jim Muller was being cut to pieces before their eyes.

The champion was very tired now. He heard the wild shouting, but what could he do? Couldn't they understand that he was doing his best? He knew he was beaten, but there was always a chance. The bookmakers were offering odds against him. That was all that roused him. And he thought of the life that thirty pieces of silver bought, and of the chaffers who changed money in the Temple.

Tomorrow the news would be all over Africa. The sweating Krooboy in the mines would add up his account against the white overseer. The tale would go to the hawks' nest in the Congo swamps, to the Matabele who sharpened assegais by stealth in the Mappopo hills, and the white-burnoused figures who hid behind rocks in the desert and waited for the brown-faced singing Zouaves.

Tomorrow the Egyptian fellaheen would read words of hope from the Koran when the trim British boy officer's back was to him. And tomorrow swarthy, green-turbaned priests would preach in angry whispers in the mosques of Kartoum.

The quick jarring taps the black drove to the base of the skull in the clinches were taking effect. He could hardly understand he was fighting. There was a white mist swirling around his knees

and stretching for miles in every direction. Little red lights flickered and went out. Above him towered a wall of black marble at which he struck with puny, futile blows. Somewhere was the bellowing of a mob in frenzy.

Through his head ran the song of

stiff huddled figures on lost fields, and of champions stricken in the lists, and of captains dying.

The angry shouting stopped, and a great silence fell about him. He knew he was on his hands and knees.

And from someone at the ringside came the sound of hard, dry sobbing.



## CONSUMMATION

By Mahlon Leonard Fisher

HE slipped a ring upon her cold,  
Worn finger, an untarnished band—  
How should it matter she was old,  
And dead?—And roses in her hand

He laid so lightly, had she slept  
The touch would not have wakened her;  
But oh, he thought her fingers crept  
About their stems with faintest stir!

He kissed her eyelids and her lips—  
Those changeless things that lovers do;  
Soul-scourged, as with a thousand whips,  
He wept: *How gray the life she knew!*

His aching hands caressed her hair;  
He called her tender names and dear;  
And haply deemed it strange that there  
In utter calm she should not hear.

And all the while her dead heart dreamed  
In peace the kindly years devise;  
His gift of roses merely seemed  
Expected proof of Paradise.



A GO-AHEAD chap can always come back.



ALL girls are dreams—until the men wake up.

# THE GRINNING MASK

By Charles Saxby

KENNAN started in surprise as he heard the knock on the door, unusual at any time, but especially at this hour of the night.

That wing of the hotel was entirely his own. He had appropriated it to his own use, and was rarely disturbed save when the servants came in the morning.

He made no attempt to open the door; he was strangely loath to call out or make any move to meet whatever that knock might portend. There is always something mysterious about a knock on the door; one never knows what may lie behind the panels; a knock may be the harbinger of anything possible to human experience.

It could not be a visitor, for Kennan never mingled with the other guests, mostly Italian commercial travelers, who came, tarried a night and then departed. But rarely did a tourist reach so far across that invisible line, just south of Naples, that bars the way of the average winter sojourner in Italy.

A telegram? No, the little office down on the *marina* was closed hours ago; it must be someone from the hotel, for no one would be likely to be abroad on such a night of bitter wind.

The knock came again, with a hint of tremulous agitation in it, and with it came Nicolo's voice calling. Kennan rose impatiently and flung open the door. Yes, there was Nicolo, his brown face drawn into terrified distortion. Behind him stood that mysterious crone who made the beds and always seemed in a fury about something, a fury so unchanging that it might have been painted on her, like a marionette pythoness who had seen better days.

A torrent of gesticulative Italian

poured in on Kennan. It was the new *signore*, the *signore Americano* who had arrived that evening. He was ill—*per Dio*—like to die, and the doctor was over the mountain at Sammichele. The *padrone* was frightened—they were all frightened, and for the love of Mary would not the *signore* come? So it went, in a whirl of polite third persons singular and a continuous shower from Nicolo's perfumed locks.

Kennan hastily girded on a thick dressing gown before venturing out into the stone corridor, icy with the blast of the *tramontana* that whistled outside. Nicolo was gone, but the Pythoness had stayed to guide him, and she flapped ahead in her huge slippers, constantly turning to survey him with the unwinking blaze of her angry eyes. She irritated Kennan; the whole place irritated him that night, full as it was of the cold sterility of the bitter wind that stole in, flaring the candle in the crone's hand, making her shadow on the wall duck and bow, recede and bulge in a sort of grotesquely sinister dance. And probably, Kennan reflected savagely, the fellow they were making all the fuss about had nothing worse the matter with him than a cold in his head—these Italians were always imagining everybody at the point of death; they seemed to enjoy it. But a call like this he could hardly, in decency, refuse; he remembered the fellow now; he had caught a glimpse of him in the restaurant that evening. A decent-looking young chap—he had wondered when he saw him what on earth the fellow could be doing so far from Rome and the polo-playing, hard-riding Embassy set to which he apparently belonged.

It was rather odd, too, the way he had started and flushed as he caught Kennan's eye as he passed, but then Kennan was used to that; it was part of the penalty of his fame, this being forever recognized by strangers. Perhaps the chap had heard something about him, some of the gossip retailed in Rome which had most likely buzzed for a day or two about him and his affairs. His sudden flight from the city, after seeing Margaret that afternoon on the Pincio, had surely served to add zest to the raking over of the old story.

The stranger's room struck with the chill of a vault as Kennan entered; it faced the north, and the uncurtained windows, through which the stars shone with a frosty glitter, shook under the press of the wind that inserted bitter fingers through the cracks, tearing at the casements like some imperious thing screaming for admittance.

A suitcase spilled its contents on the floor; an opened trunk showed some half-hearted attempts at unpacking; the table and chairs were littered with garments and toilet articles. Kennan felt, illogically enough, almost a sense of intrusion at thus walking in upon this involuntary exposure of the private affairs of an utter stranger; it savored too much of a haphazard intimacy, a thing he abhorred.

The young American was lying on the bed, still dressed, and Kennan saw that for once Nicolo had not exaggerated. The man was in the grip of one of those Italian "winter fevers" that rage and riot so virulently when they fasten on the fresh constitution of a northerner, and to which youth and health seem only as additional fuel to the flames. He was apparently only half-conscious, but he roused himself at Kennan's touch, while over his face swept an expression of shamed surprise, as though he had been detected in some overt act.

"Mr. Kennan!" he ejaculated weakly.

"That is my name," said Kennan. "Lie down and keep quiet; why did you not send for me sooner?"

"Send for you!" echoed the other. "Believe me—I did not send for you; I couldn't—not that—"

"Never mind; keep still and let me get those things off you," commanded Kennan.

But the young fellow still protested.

"You don't understand. I am—"

"That will do," said Kennan sharply. The chap was plainly half delirious already. "We will do our introducing tomorrow. Here—Nicolo—help me get the *signore* to bed."

In his thirty-two years Kennan had wandered much and in strange places; he had pulled men through and been himself pulled through many vicissitudes, and his experience and skill were entirely adequate for the case in hand. He set to work with authority and dispatch; it was lucky for the fellow, he reflected, that he had fallen into his hands, and that the Italian doctor, with his weird nostrums and passion for phlebotomy, was over the hills and far away.

In an hour all was done that could be. The patient had fallen into a heavy, unconscious sleep, and there was nothing to do but to wait for those hours before the dawn, always to be dreaded for those of impaired vitality, when the veil wears thinnest and that which is behind stretches forth greedy fingers.

Kennan sent Nicolo to fetch his coffee equipage from his rooms and then dismissed him; he and the crone would watch, and he tried to settle down to his vigil with what comfort he could.

The Pythoness crouched over the fire, clutching her squalid garments about her, a figure of strangely unvenerable decrepitude as she stretched out to the blaze her spindle shanks and feet in the huge, flapping slippers.

She was getting on Kennan's nerves again, those sensitive mental antennæ of the artist, irritating him with her perpetual, angry self-communings. She looked as if she ought to be dead, as if she might, in reality, have died long ago, but that some half-idiot phantom had stolen in to animate the mummifying body.

There was the suggestion of a leer back in her insane eyes, like a spirit of ribald burlesque peering through a caricatured mask of tragedy. She ought to



have been pitiful; as it was, she was only grotesque.

Kennan paced restlessly about, his nerves on edge under the searching electrical wind. The exhilaration and self-forgetfulness of the first hour of service to another were dying down in him, and he faced the long night with a sigh of premonitory weariness as he looked about the dreary room.

His own apartments he had made comfortable with hangings and rugs, with great candlesticks and artistic gleanings from three continents. Like most men who travel much and live much alone, he had the knack of making any place in which he tarried, even over night, exclusively his own. But this bare, whitewashed place, the ceiling daubed with a sixteenth rate attempt at a fresco—an atrocity of daringness possible only to Southern Italy—was like an empty shell; it looked what it was, a place for hire, ready to be prostituted to the convenience of any chance comer.

He had curtained the windows and shut out the sight of the green-black sky with its cold stars, but the wind still whistled outside. He could picture it all out there, the twisted aloes, the bending palms, the olives chafing their limbs as if in torment; the gray landscape stripped by the lash of the wind of all atmospheric glamor, like a drop curtain seen by daylight, hard under the moonlight as a world of cast iron.

For the moment he hated the place, hated Italy and all that it implied: its sentimentalities, its sordid passions, its historic background of blood-stained loves and tragedies that always seemed to degenerate into the squalor of a butcher's shambles, with a crowd of nasty little boys peering in with derisive laughter. Italy seemed to him like a psychic porous plaster, that drew to the surface all the emotional inflammations of the mind. He was conscious of a longing for his own country, for its keen, almost acid mental atmospheres. For relief he bent over the unconscious man; here at least was one of his own people, someone he could understand, cleanly, cool-headed, poised.

With the trained eye of the artist, he noted the severely cut features, the contour of the body outlined by the coverings. A well-looking young chap, worth the saving; and saving him he was, he knew that—it might have gone ill with the fellow but for his timely aid.

He lighted the alcohol in the brass lamp and brewed some coffee, handing a cup to the old Pythoness, who snatched it from him and gulped it down as if afraid that he might take it from her again.

Poor old soul, thought Kennan; no wonder she hugged the fire and was willing to stay up; it was probably the first time in her life that she had been warm on a winter's night. She must have been young once, possibly beautiful, as so many of these Calabrese were; she must have known love and passion. And now to come to this grisly caricature of womanhood, unnoticed save to be laughed at! Why, he did not even know her name. To her face she was "Thou," and behind her back "the Pythoness" in cynical amusement.

"What do they call you?" he asked. He did not say, "What is your name?" It was so impossible to think of her owning even a name.

She stared up at him, clawing back the wisps of hair from her eyes. "Margarita, *Eccellenza*," she croaked. "*Sì—son io Margarita*."

The name and all that it implied hit Kennan like a blow between the eyes.

Margarita—Margaret!

For an hour he had forgotten, but now it came back upon him, singing in his brain: "Margaret—Margaret—Margaret"—a noble name set to a thin strain of music, lilting and trivial yet elusively haunting, each note a stab to which the wind outside moaned a jeering bass.

Margaret—Margaret of the sad-sweet smile, that pink and gold Madonna with the blazing white body of one of Tintoretto's pagan angels. That was all she was, he knew it now, just a lovely body with nothing behind it to lift up or cast down, nothing that could understand nor satisfy, merely an exquisite piece of flesh; but, God, how he longed for her!

He revolted against it; it was all so

uncalled for, so useless, this obsession she had over his senses. There were cities full of women, many of them as beautiful as she, all of them to be won, some of them to be bought; why could he not take the goods the gods provided and be thankful?

If Margaret had only died it would have been easier; he could have consoled himself then. It was the thought that she was still alive and that another man held the place that had once been his by right. It was the thought of Roscoe, that was it—how he detested him! He had never seen Roscoe, thank heaven, and in the rational regions that underlay his seething emotions Kennan acknowledged that he had no real cause of complaint against Roscoe—it was merely that he was Margaret's husband. Looking back in the light of later knowledge, he even doubted if Roscoe had had any inkling of Margaret's intentions toward him, until she had obtained her divorce and suddenly married him in a sort of dazzle of haste and imperious beauty.

Kennan had not been as great four years before as he was now, and Roscoe was then only twenty-three; a boy in the throes of his first great passion, rich in his own right, heir to more, and son of a man so well established that he had come to be accepted as a permanent, professional ambassador.

Margaret had done well. She always did well; she had but one stock-in-trade, and took it to the best markets.

She was the curse of Kennan's life with her unforgettable beauty; he had never loved her as he had it in him to love, he knew that—there had been nothing in her to call it forth. The blow had been to his self-esteem, to his physical pride; but that, to a man, is the hardest blow of all. Such a blow had Margaret dealt him, throwing him aside as soon as he had served her purpose; Margaret Roscoe as she was now, Margaret Kennan as she had been, Margaret Pennyfeather before that.

Farther back Kennan did not go; it was bad enough to have one's life wrecked by a woman, but by a woman who had been a Pennyfeather—there

was the hateful note of the grotesque dogging on the heels of his sublimities; it always made him feel as if he were being made a fool of.

A restless sigh from the sleeper aroused him and he turned in relief. Here at least was something to do, something outside the nauseous mess of his life. There was no change in the sufferer as yet, he noted; and glancing impatiently about for something to relieve his need of action, Kennan began to pick up the garments he had strewn, man-fashion, upon the floor. A pocketbook fell from a coat; he picked it up and glanced at the name embossed upon it; after all, he had better know who the fellow was. The name that met his eye was Herbert Roscoe.

How long he sat there Kennan never knew. It seemed like a million years spent in a black pit of purely physical hate. He had been tricked—that was what infuriated him—tricked into a false position. How Rome would laugh when it heard the story—himself nursing, in ignorance of his identity, the man for whom he had been discarded! He felt like one of those pitiful figures of fun, the deceived husband in a French farce.

They would not let him have even the bitterness of his tragedy in peace, but insisted on bedaubing it with their hateful burlesques. They would be laughing at him—Margaret—Roscoe—all their world; and for such a cause—that was what hurt—the cause for their laughter.

It was the Pythoness who roused him at last, shaking his shoulder and screaming at him. "*Il signore!*" she croaked, pointing to the bed. "*Freddo—cold—cold.*" She dragged him to his feet, thrusting her face into his, squawking her refrain: "*Cold—cold.*" It was perhaps the thing she best understood and most feared, to be cold.

Kennan followed her mechanically; his mind was still benumbed and he had not yet made the connection between that which was within him and his surroundings. The young fellow lay there as before, but Kennan noted a change, a sharpness in the features, a

gray pallor on the cheeks. The moment for action had come—was almost past, indeed. He turned to give an order; then the feel of the pocketbook in his hand recalled him.

That was Roscoe. That was the man who— Why was he there? Had he followed for the sake of getting the cheap triumph of seeing the man he had displaced? The blood surged over Kennan's face and neck, roaring in his ears, pricking his skin.

The Pythoness plucked excitedly at his sleeve, and he became aware that he was standing there, a prey to the blackest emotions, absently rubbing his nose with the pocketbook. Bah! He flung the thing from him.

"Cold," croaked the Pythoness again, and Kennan was aware of a strange sensation of chill in the air. It was as though there were a presence in the room, a thing of ineffable cold hovering at the foot of the bed. He recognized it; he had met it at other lonely bed-sides on the fringes of the world; but never before had he met it like this. It had always come as an enemy; now there was about it a hateful, sneering suggestion that it was there as his ally, almost at his bidding.

It would be so easy, whispered a little devil back in his brain; he could do all he could yet just miss that white hot purpose that alone would be of any avail. He would have peace then; Roscoe would be gone, and with him those tormenting, unbidden pictures—and yet he would have done all he could; no one—not even himself—could reproach him.

A shiver of deadly repulsion went through him at the thought of what he would have to do in any case. How could he touch that man at all? The very grace of his youth was only an added affront.

The Pythoness clutched at him again and Kennan was dully aware that she was pleading with him. In her eyes shone a spark of sanity, a gleam of mother instinct; for the moment she was almost human. Then as she whirled about one of her slippers flew off. She tore at her hair in fury, hopping after the slipper with a torrent of Italian

revilings, standing on one leg, fishing for it with twisted toes like a wicked cartoon of a ballet dancer.

Kennan felt a hysteric impulse of cackling laughter rising up in him. He could have stood by with the awful conceited frown of a recording angel, or any other celestial stupidity that might conceive it a duty to mete out judgments to man—he could have let Roscoe die—he could have done anything if the setting had only been right. But this commonplace room, the flapping old Pythoness, and he himself, sweating blood and scratching his nose with the pocketbook—it was like a tragedy in a Punch and Judy show. With a flash of insight he saw himself hovering over his emotions like a broody hen, hatching out a sable-plumed bird of tragedy—then a cool breath of reason stripped it of its feathers and exposed it in the comic nudity of a plucked chicken.

What a solemn ass he had been! Good God—suppose it were too late! He flung himself headlong at that chill presence hovering at the foot of the bed.

Kennan had thought that as soon as Roscoe was able to leave he would, of course, take himself off; if it were curiosity that had brought him there, it was surely satisfied now.

To his unspoken surprise, the other still lingered, and Kennan, besides being mystified by this tacit refusal to go, was even a little disappointed in it; it implied a lack of delicacy on Roscoe's part that he had not expected.

He would have ignored Roscoe if he could; he still detested him so much with that perverted pride of physical jealousy that, in spite of all his efforts to shake it off, still gripped him. But amid the complex claims of modern civilization he could hardly refuse to speak to a man whom he had just pulled through an illness that, but for his timely aid, might have gone very hard. That would be taking an altogether too great advantage of his position—there were moments when Kennan found himself regretting the days of the cave men and their simpler ways of settling their problems.

Yet he could not help a certain liking for Roscoe, too; and then while Roscoe was there with him he was at least not with Margaret. Roscoe was certainly behaving well, far better, Kennan was aware, than he was himself. In fact, Roscoe's manner was a model to be copied by all the tribe of "my former wife's present husbands" all the world over when in the presence of "their present wife's former husbands." There was a certain suggestion of sympathy on Roscoe's part, almost a hint of asking for sympathy for himself, and, strangest of all, an impression that he was secretly enjoying a joke which, for some occult reason, he imagined that Kennan was secretly enjoying, too.

What Kennan could not make out was, why was Roscoe there at all? He shivered with apprehension sometimes lest Margaret, too, should appear upon the scene; they seemed to be capable of anything, those two. Yet even that contingency was losing some of its terrors; somehow Margaret did not seem to matter so much as she had. Something had snapped in Kennan with that burst of cynical laughter at Roscoe's bedside that night; he was getting a new angle on Margaret, a different vista which at times he half believed to be an unconscious reflex of Roscoe's own unspoken attitude toward her. He had even found himself wondering if Margaret was getting stout—that was always the trouble with those natural blondes—and she liked good living.

It was about a week after Roscoe's convalescence. He and Kennan chanced to be out on the little garden terrace at the same time, when Margaret descended on them.

It was splendidly done—but then Margaret always did things well. There was a sudden clatter of hoofs, a jingling of harness, two black horses with all the accompaniments of tossing manes and foam-flecked flanks, a great yellow and silver barouche and, descending from the midst of it all, a radiant vision in sea green, towing behind her a corpulent Italian with the eyes of a dead fish on a slab of ice.

For an instant Kennan almost reeled

under the shock, yet he was conscious, too, that it was not nearly so great as he had expected. Even in the dizzying whirl of successive emotions he found himself noting that Margaret was stouter than before, that the tints of her complexion were a trifle fixed, that there was even a shade of lavender in them that the dusting of powder was powerless to conceal. He suddenly remembered that she was at least thirty-four. She was quite unembarrassed as she came languidly forward; in fact, Kennan was the only one who appeared to feel the situation at all; the Italian merely stared with unmeltable coldness and Roscoe frankly grinned.

Margaret smiled upon them all with that vague, sad-sweet smile that had haunted Kennan's dreams so long, that smile that meant so much, so little, or anything that one chose to read into it.

At that moment Kennan saw why Margaret was always so at peace with herself—she was perpetually and eternally just Margaret; she had never pretended anything, never even imagined that there was anything to pretend to; if she did not measure up to other people's ideals of her that was not her fault.

She extended a simultaneous hand to each of them, greeting them as "Norman—Herbert." It was so sweet to see them again—and together, too. She had always thought they would get along well—they were so much alike in so many ways. They must come and call at the Castello—just over there, you know—such a sweet old place; and, oh, she had forgotten—"Mr. Kennan—Mr. Roscoe—my husband, Prince Colonia." Kennan was aware that he was vaguely bowing in the direction of those unwinking, fishy eyes; then the same smile, a languid, trailing good-bye, a chuckle from Roscoe, a clatter of hoofs and wheels, a whirl of yellow and silver, the wave of a parasol—and she was gone.

Kennan stared at Roscoe with a gleam of light breaking through the maze of his brain.

"So that was it!" he ejaculated. "Good Lord—that was it, was it?"



Roscoe faced him in amazement. "Didn't you know?"

Kennan shook his head. "I thought that you were still—that she—"

"Great Scott! What sort of a bounder do you think I am?" Roscoe exclaimed, flushing with chagrin. "I was sure you knew. I came down here on purpose to see you—and you kept so still about it that I thought you knew and were enjoying the joke as I was."

"Did she—was it—" asked Kennan vaguely.

"Same old gag," said Roscoe simply, as he filled his pipe. "Two years, and then the usual thing. Extreme mental cruelty was the charge. She hit me below the belt when I was down with typhoid. I didn't contest; I was too much broken up over it. I imagined that she was an angel, and that I was the greatest scoundrel unhung—I had to be somehow. That was nearly two years ago—I was just a kid still. I've grown some since," he added grimly.

"Good God, man! Don't you *care*?" Kennan burst out.

"It nearly killed me," replied Roscoe cheerfully. "At least I thought it did, but I'm still living. Oh, yes, I cared; she had me hypnotized—she knows how to pick her people. Pennyfeather started her—you gave her position—money she got from me. Maggie has done well—she is a princess now—she has reached the top. And—I notice she has let out her corsets a couple of inches," he finished with deliberate brutality.

"Why did you come here after me?" demanded Kennan. "What have we to do with each other?"

Roscoe turned away and kicked boyishly at the gravel. "Why—I—I had heard what an—I mean, how hard you were taking it. Oh, I was just as big an ass myself at first. But when she bought Corlonia with my money, why—I suddenly saw the joke, and—well—I wanted you to see it, too. It made me furious, your life being spoiled for just Margaret; besides, it was giving her a great deal too much satisfaction. Man, she isn't worth a minute's heartache! I can say it, for I have been her husband,

too; and it's funny—deuced funny—can't you see that?"

Kennan wiped the sweat from his forehead. Oh, yes, it was funny, deuced funny—that was just it. The sable cloak of his tragedy was rent again by the sharp humor of it all; he could feel the rags flapping grotesquely about his legs.

"And the funniest part of it is this," continued Roscoe, a couple of cynical demons dancing in his eyes: "*She won't get rid of Corlonia*. She doesn't know what she has laid up for herself there—he is an Italian, not a sentimental, chivalrous American idiot, like us."

Kennan walked furiously away. Roscoe was right, he knew that, entirely right with that beastly, clear, grinning vision of his. He was grateful for the mental surgical operation that Roscoe was performing on his mind—but it hurt. It was the memory of that night that hurt the most, of the time that he had hung over Roscoe's unconscious body, filled with a fierce desire to destroy it. It had all been so futile—so uncalled-for.

Kennan followed him diffidently. "I say, you don't mind, do you? Oh, of course you *mind*—you can't help it. But don't hold it against me. You are really an awfully good fellow, Kennan. You saved my life that night, too—I know that."

Kennan turned on him blackly. "I didn't save your life. It was Margarita did that."

"Margarita? The Pythoness?" asked Roscoe in bewilderment.

"Yes. She made me do it. I meant—I meant to—" Kennan broke off and finished with a stare into the other's eyes, then stood half expecting Roscoe to turn on his heel and walk away—to strike him down—look at him with loathing—anything would be a relief.

"Good Lord above us!" breathed Roscoe, sticking his pipe back between his teeth and grinning remorselessly into Kennan's desperate eyes. "Oh, gad—what a thriller!"

He had the other at his mercy; Kennan had placed himself there by his confession, and Roscoe drove his advantage

relentlessly home, tearing the tragic mask from the whole affair, turning it inside out, exposing it for the painted sham it really was.

Kennan knew what Roscoe was doing; he even suspected that the doing of it was not so easy as the other pretended; he took his medicine with stoical fortitude, and under the rain of pitiless sentences he felt his brain clearing of its fog of the frazzled-out ends of dead emotions.

"Midnight"—Roscoe was going mercilessly on—"lonely inn—helpless hated rival. Noble nature struggling with temptation—*did* you struggle, Kennan? I bet you did—you are the kind that would—I'll lay odds you suffered the torments of hell. But you wouldn't have done it, you know—not really. You may like to think you would, but you wouldn't—you are too *good*. Ha-ha! Enter rescuing damsel, the Pythoness

with a past—the antique Mulberry Bend siren in her number twelves! Noble nature conquered by Pity—and all about Margaret—the Princess Corlonia that is—Maggie Pennyfeather that was—to whom we are merely two rungs of the ladder. Heavens, man, why don't you laugh? It's funny, damn it—it's funny!" And he broke off in a jarring laugh.

"Stop your infernal row!" cried Kennan savagely. "If you ever speak of it again—" He stopped suddenly, conscious of a little quiver somewhere down in the depths of his being. In spite of himself it came boiling up, breaking the rigidity of his eyes, curling his lips in a half-shamed reply to Roscoe's remorseless grin.

"Oh, for heaven's sake, stop it!" he said. "What I want—what you want"—he drew Roscoe's arm under his own—"what we both want is a drink. Let's go and look for one."



## A PICTURE

By Elizabeth Curtis Holman

O'ER hills of dream a magical, pale moon  
Looks softly down, as through a bridal mist,  
A Psyche, whom her wingèd spouse has kissed,  
Till all the young night world is half a-swoon  
With hint of vague delights and raptures, soon  
To be bestowed, which no man may resist;  
Spring calling Earth to his immortal tryst,  
Earth proffering Life a pleasaunce and a boon!  
The body and soul of Love are on the air!  
The pink-flowered Peach, close-clasped to Twilight, lies,  
Trembles, and yields her last, sweet fires there:  
The little Pear Tree dwells in other guise,  
Gleams, in her virgin snows, unearthly fair,  
And points Love upward into Paradise.



THE optimist sees only the beautiful scenery—the pessimist sees the rattle-snakes in the grass; that's the reason we have so many pessimists—they live longer.

# SECRETS OF THE DEEP\*

By Thomas Grant Springer

## CHARACTERS

JOHN BRICE (*master diver*)  
BILL BENTLEY (*his partner*)  
JOSE AND ROMERO (*peons*)  
COMMANDANTE of *Libreria*  
QUARTERMASTER of the "*San Carlos*"  
A DREAM  
A PASSENGER

SCENE I—Deck of the "*Sea Gull*"

SCENE II—Coral Reef off Corona, ten fathoms down

SCENE—Deck of the diver's tug, "*Sea Gull*." To the right the galley and after cabin; in the center the hatchway leading below; to the left the wheelhouse. Across the back stretches the rail, and beyond a vista of sky and sea. As the curtain rises JOSE is lying half across the rail on the air-pump fast asleep. At his feet are coils of rope and diving gear. A little way from him ROMERO is sitting in the scuppers with his back against the rail. On his knees is the diver's helmet. His head rests upon it and he, too, is fast asleep. Both are Central American peons, clad in ragged shirts and trousers and frayed native straw hats. They are barefooted and dusky-skinned. The light is that of a still tropic noon. Through-out the first scene the monotonous ringing of two distant bell buoys is heard, and the boat rocks lazily on the tropic swell. BENTLEY comes round the wheelhouse. He is a quick, energetic and rather rough American, deeply tanned by the tropic sun. He is clad in dirty khaki trousers and shirt, open at the neck, and wears an old panama hat. He surveys the sleeping peons with a tolerant shrug, then goes over and kicks JOSE in the ribs.

BENTLEY

Get up, you lazy son of a dog, or you'll stick fast to the pitch that's boiling out of the deck. (JOSE yawns and stretches. BENTLEY goes over and shakes ROMERO, who wakes slowly.) Here, here, wake up or you'll cook that fat head of

yours on that helmet. (He touches the helmet, then blows his fingers as if they were burnt.) By God, you two could sleep on the gridiron of hell! And I'll book your passage there if you don't get a move on you.

(JOSE and ROMERO stir into languid action.)

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## THE SMART SET

ROMERO

I thought the Señor Brice was through for the day.

BENTLEY

No such luck for you two. His señora is coming up on the *San Carlos*, and he's going to anchor that last buoy so as to have a lover's spell ashore. Here you, Jose, coil up that line and put a little oil on that pump crank; it wheezes worse than you do in the siesta hour.

JOSE

*Si, señor. (He putters listlessly about the gear.)*

BENTLEY

Romero, draw up a bucket of water and souse that helmet, or you'll cook the señor when you try to screw it on him.

*(ROMERO lazily heaves a bucket over the side, cooling the helmet.)*

ROMERO

*Si, señor.*

JOSE

And the Señor Brice descends once more?

BENTLEY

Once more, and then we drop down the coast to meet the *San Carlos* and his señora. Now hustle and see that you're ready for him or I'll set my foot to the two of you.

*(BENTLEY goes round the wheelhouse. ROMERO and JOSE watch him off with fearful laziness.)*

JOSE *(shaking his head)*

Oh, these gringos. Not for a thousand pesos would I man these devil's contraptions again.

ROMERO

Nor I. It is well that the señor anchors the last buoy and sets us ashore before he flies to meet his señora.

JOSE

He surely is the servant of *Diablo*. Who else could walk upon the bottom of the sea and learn the secrets of the deep that are hidden from the eyes of man?

ROMERO

*Si*; and those bells he has anchored on the reef ring like chimes on the cathedral of the Evil One. *(He crosses himself, glancing fearfully over the rail.)* Dios defend us; let us finish the work and be set safely ashore again. *(He begins mopping the deck after sousing the helmet.)*

JOSE *(glancing fearfully about)*

One may dive like a man and be a man, but to descend into the depths, to be brother to the shark, to crawl with the slimy things upon the ocean floor—*(He shivers and crosses himself.)* Santa Maria defend us from the black magic of it!

ROMERO

*Si, si*; let us make haste and see the last of it. *(They begin to work feverishly. BENTLEY comes round the wheelhouse.)*

BENTLEY *(grinning)*

Well, thank God something has injected life into you and saved my shoe leather! Are the hooks over the side, Jose?

JOSE

*Si, señor.*

BENTLEY

Romero, go aft and see that the tow-line of that buoy is fast.

ROMERO

*Si, señor. (He goes off back of the galley.)*

BENTLEY

And you, Jose, go forward and see to the other one.

JOSE

*Si, señor. (Jose goes off round the wheelhouse. BENTLEY crosses toward the wheelhouse and calls off.)*

BENTLEY

Ahoy, skipper!

VOICE *(off)*

Aye, aye, sir.

BENTLEY

Whistle the engineer and make ready to drop down the coast. We'll be off in an hour.

VOICE *(off)*

Aye, aye, sir.

*(BENTLEY looks about the deck, then crosses to the hatchway.)*



BENTLEY (*down the hatchway*)  
All right, Brice; how about you?

BRICE (*from the hatchway*)  
Coming up, right away.  
(BENTLEY looks hurriedly about the deck, then goes up to the rail and examines the pump. Enter BRICE from the hatchway. He is in diving suit except for the foot weights and helmet.)

BRICE (*glancing about the deck*)  
All set, Bill?

BENTLEY  
All set. Romero and Jose are making fast the lines. The hooks are over the side, the float is ready, and now it's all up to you.

BRICE (*going up to the rail*)  
What time is it?

BENTLEY  
Eight bells about ready to strike.

BRICE (*sitting on a bucket by the rail*)  
Then I'll finish the job and we'll drop down and catch the *San Carlos* off Corona.

BENTLEY (*laughing*)  
Say, a lover was never more impatient than you are as a husband.

BRICE (*rising*)  
A husband? I'm a slave. I'm a worshiper at the shrine of a goddess. Bentley, how that angel, who is more than woman, ever allowed me even to kiss her white feet is a thing that always clutches my heart with a sudden chill of wonder.

BENTLEY (*quizzically*)  
Are you going to start to rave again?

BRICE (*slapping him on the shoulder*)  
But she's coming, man, she's coming; she's almost here. I'm going to drop down the coast to meet her. I'm going to take those little soft hands of hers in my big rough ones and look into those wondering eyes from which a soul too pure gazes out upon this soiled world. (*He holds out his hands.*) See how my hands tremble at the very thought that

they will soon touch her. You don't know, man—you'll never know till your own rough feet stumble into the pure heaven of such a woman's love.

BENTLEY  
I guess I haven't been your partner for five years without getting a pretty good idea from hearsay. (*He laughs good-naturedly.*) But go on, rave, old boy; it's good to hear it in such a cynical old world as this where there's too few of us fit for real love when it comes to us.

BRICE  
I know I'm not.

BENTLEY  
Brice, you're a man, a real man, and that's enough for the love of the best woman living.

BRICE  
But I tell you she isn't a woman—she's an angel, too pure to touch, too tender for what we men call love, why— Oh, call the boys and let's be finished. I'm wasting time I want to give to her. (*He goes up and sits on a bucket by the rail.*)

That's the talk. (*He calls off.*) Hey, Romero, Jose!

JOSE (*off left*)  
*Si, señor.*

ROMERO (*off right*)  
*Si, señor.*  
(*Enter JOSE round the wheelhouse, ROMERO round the galley.*)

BENTLEY  
Get yourselves set.  
(ROMERO crosses and picks up the helmet; JOSE goes to the rail and adjusts the pump gear.)

BRICE (*looking about*)  
Everything ready?

BENTLEY (*kneeling and strapping his weights*)

All ready. I let down the anchor a while ago. The buoy is in place and you won't be down ten minutes.

BRICE

Give me that helmet, Romero.

(BENTLEY and ROMERO set the helmet on BRICE's head, then screw it on. JOSE starts the pump. BRICE clumsily mounts the rail, assisted by BENTLEY and ROMERO.)

BENTLEY (*helping BRICE over the rail*)

Now, over we go.

(BENTLEY and ROMERO lower BRICE down. BENTLEY looks over the side a moment, then turns back. ROMERO pays out the line.)

BENTLEY (*to JOSE*)

Now mind that pump and don't go to sleep at it. And you, Romero, see that the lines don't get foul, and watch the signal.

ROMERO

Si, señor.

BENTLEY (*crossing and calling off left*)  
Hey, skipper!

VOICE (*off left*)

Well, sir?

BENTLEY

Ready to get under way at a moment's notice. Brice is over for the last time. We'll hoist anchor as soon as he's aboard.

VOICE (*off left*)

Righto.

(The ship's bell strikes.)

BENTLEY (*turning back*)

Mind your eye now, the two of you, and don't go to sleep.

VOICE (*off left*)

Sea Gull ahoy!

BENTLEY

What the devil's that? (*He goes up to the rail and leans over.*) Launch ahoy! (*He turns back impatiently.*) It's the Commandante's launch. What the devil can he be wanting?

JOSE

Quien sabe, señor.

BENTLEY

Mind your eye now till I see him aboard. (*He steps back of the wheelhouse.*)

JOSE

'Tis well the Commandante comes. I shall ask to go ashore with him.

ROMERO

Si; we will get our pay and be off or else the señor may make us go down the coast with him.

JOSE

No, he goes to his señora and love; Dios give them joy.

(BENTLEY comes round the wheelhouse followed by the COMMANDANTE and QUARTERMASTER. The former is a dark-complexioned, mustached officer in a brilliant uniform. The other is in the uniform of the merchant marine. He hangs back as BENTLEY and the COMMANDANTE come down.)

BENTLEY

Well, Commandante, glad to have you aboard.

COMMANDANTE

I was afraid I should not be in time.

BENTLEY

How's that?

COMMANDANTE

It is to see Señor Brice.

BENTLEY

Well, a half-hour more and you wouldn't have been in time. He's anchoring the last of your buoys, and he'll be up any minute; then we're off down the coast.

COMMANDANTE

Dios be praised, I am in time! I must see him.

BENTLEY

Wait a little till he comes up—and then you'll have to cut it short. We're ready to weigh anchor the minute he appears.

COMMANDANTE

It is well I got here. I have important work for him.

BENTLEY

Nothing doing. He's off to meet his wife, and there isn't a job on the West Coast that's big enough to tempt him.

COMMANDANTE

But he must come immediately.  
There is no time to lose.

BENTLEY

Not a chance. Better come below and have a drink so his refusal won't hurt quite so much.

COMMANDANTE

No, Señor Bentley; it is no time to joke. It is a matter of treasure, governmental treasure, gold bars from the south coming up to be coined; and the vessel sank—

BENTLEY

H'm. Well, in that case I'll go down myself for you as soon as we have the Señor Brice and his missus safe ashore. Where is the vessel?

COMMANDANTE

She struck that reef fifteen miles below.

BENTLEY

Serves you right for not getting us before. She wasn't as dangerous as this one before we buoyed it. What's the vessel, a tramp?

COMMANDANTE

No, señor; the regular steamer—

BENTLEY (*shouting*)

What!

COMMANDANTE

The *San Carlos*.

BENTLEY

Good God! (*He recovers himself, and turns, half joking.*) Say, talk sense; why, the sea's been like glass for a month—

COMMANDANTE

But the reef, señor—

BENTLEY

Impossible; why, it was charted—  
(*The QUARTERMASTER, who has hung back at the rail, comes down.*)

QUARTERMASTER

Beg pardon, sir, it's true.

BENTLEY (*turning fiercely on him*)  
How the devil do you know?

QUARTERMASTER

I'm the man who brought the news, sir. I was on watch in the wheelhouse. It was the captain's first trip, sir; he was from the East Coast—transferred. He laid the course, but he must have overlooked the reef. We struck her amidships at fifteen knots, sir—

BENTLEY

Good God, it isn't possible!

QUARTERMASTER

Yes, sir, we ripped the whole bottom out of her and she sank in three minutes, sir. I was in the only boat that got away. It was lashed behind the bridge. The captain went down and every officer—

BENTLEY

You lie!

QUARTERMASTER

I wish I did, sir. We were cutting the lashings when the captain gave me the ship's papers. I was sure the other boats would get off, but there wasn't time. Why, the passengers didn't even know we'd struck. She was an old tub, and she filled like a sieve.

COMMANDANTE

Si; and there is a strong tide rip there. Why, even now she may be swept off the reef with the governmental treasure—

BENTLEY

Damn the treasure! Where's the passenger list?

QUARTERMASTER (*giving him some papers*)

Here it is, sir.

(*BENTLEY looks down the list in a sort of nervous terror.*)

COMMANDANTE

You see, señor, I must have Señor Brice.

BENTLEY (*giving the papers to the QUARTERMASTER*)

Brice! You're locoed. man. His wife was on that boat!

ROMERO (*from the rail*)

Give a hand, Señor Bentley; the signal.

## THE SMART SET

BENTLEY (*crossing to the rail*)

Keep your mouth shut, Commandante; be careful. (*He seizes the rope and helps ROMERO hoist.*) Heave ho, heave ho!

COMMANDANTE (*to the QUARTERMASTER*)  
I do not know what to do.

QUARTERMASTER (*shaking his head*)  
It's an awful mess, sir.

(*The QUARTERMASTER goes up to the rail near the wheelhouse as BENTLEY and ROMERO assist BRICE over the side. His suit is running water and he sits heavily on a bucket while they unscrew his helmet. The COMMANDANTE leans on the hatch. As the helmet is lifted BRICE draws a long breath.*)

BRICE

Whew! That's a relief. (*He sees the COMMANDANTE.*) Why, hello, Commandante; when did you get aboard?  
(*They slip the weights from his feet.*)

COMMANDANTE

But just now, señor.

BRICE (*coming down*)

Well, howdy and adios. Your last warning voice is set on the reef, and now I'm off to the call of a sweeter voice.

COMMANDANTE

Señor—I—I—

BENTLEY (*quickly*)

Better hurry below, Brice. I want to talk to the Commandante.

BRICE

Well, go ahead, talk; I'm in on it. Anything wrong, Commandante?

COMMANDANTE

No, señor, I—I—

BENTLEY

Say, Brice, you go below and get out of that suit.

BRICE (*suspiciously*)

What the devil's the matter? If you've got anything to say, Commandante, hurry and get it out of your

system. I'm going to drop down the coast and meet my wife on the *San Carlos*—sabe?

COMMANDANTE

Ah, señor, the *San Carlos*—

BENTLEY (*fiercely*)

Shut up, you fool! Brice, come below; I want to talk to you.

BRICE

What's happened to the *San Carlos*? Out with it—tell me!

COMMANDANTE

She—she struck a reef.

BRICE

God!

BENTLEY (*stepping to him*)

Brice—Brice!

BRICE (*quietly*)

Go on—go on. (*BENTLEY impulsively puts his arm about BRICE. He takes it away quietly.*) It's all right, Bentley. Now, now what about it, Commandante? (*The QUARTERMASTER comes slowly from the rail.*)

COMMANDANTE

This man here, señor—  
(*BRICE turns.*)

QUARTERMASTER

We struck about three this morning, sir; ripped the whole bottom out of her and sank in three minutes.

BRICE

And the boats—

QUARTERMASTER

Only one got away, sir. I saved the ship's papers—

BRICE

Give them to me. (*BRICE takes the papers and runs through them hurriedly.*)

COMMANDANTE (*anxiously*)

There is a strong tide rip there, señor. There are gold bars aboard, government treasure—



BRICE (*turning on him*)

Treasure! Man, the treasure of heaven was aboard that boat! (*He taps the papers fiercely, then turns.*) Bentley, weigh anchor; crowd on every pound of steam!

BENTLEY

Brice, for God's sake go ashore with the Commandante; let me go down.

BRICE

What, after my treasure? (*He shakes his head, then rouses and calls off left.*) Skipper!

VOICE (*off left*)

Aye, aye, sir.

BRICE

Hoist anchor and full speed down the coast.

VOICE (*off left*)

Aye, aye, sir.

BRICE (*quietly, to the QUARTERMASTER*)

Where is Cabin Eighteen?

QUARTERMASTER

Port side, upper deck, outside, sir. (*The engine bell tinkles.*)

BRICE (*to BENTLEY*)

That's hers. Keep the list, Bentley. (*He gives him the papers. The engines begin to move.*)

COMMANDANTE

Señor, I must go ashore—

BRICE (*fiercely*)

Nobody leaves this boat! (*He calls off left.*) Under way there!

VOICE (*off left*)

Aye, aye, sir.

JOSE (*rushing down from the rail*)

Oh, señor, I cannot go, I cannot go!

BRICE (*throwing him back*)

Back to the rail. Bentley, keep your eye on them; we want all hands.

(*JOSE and ROMERO kneel at the rail, and, pulling out a rosary, start to tell the beads. The whistle blows, then comes the throbbing of the engines.*)

BENTLEY

Brice, for God's sake go below, then take off that suit and let me go down in your place.

BRICE

What, for my treasure? Man, do you think that any hands but mine could touch her? Why, her white soul would feel the profanation of it and shrink even in death. No, no, I must go, I must go.

BENTLEY

But it's too much for any man to stand.

BRICE

Why, she's waiting for me; she knows I'm coming; in life or death she knows I couldn't fail her. (*He holds out his hands.*) See, I'm steady as steel. I'm going down and take her from the deep. She'd be afraid if she thought I wasn't coming. She'd be terrified at all the slimy things I've seen upon the ocean floor—the things that crawl, the fish that might gnaw upon that tender flesh—(*He shudders, throws up his arms wildly, then shouts off left.*) Get under way—for God's sake, move! I'm coming, I'm coming, my darling! (*He falls sobbing face down upon the deck.*) BENTLEY kneels beside him, awkwardly patting his shoulder. The COMMANDANTE and the QUARTERMASTER stand in sympathetic perplexity near the hatch, ROMERO and JOSE kneel with their heads up at the rail.)

## SCENE II

THE reef off Corona, ten fathoms down. In the dim blue twilight of the ocean's floor the waving kelp of the bottom is seen, with the fishes darting to and fro. Above the kelp line rises the black hulk of the sunken steamer, with its listed deck and the dim white of its upper cabins. Dropping slowly down comes BRICE in complete diving dress. He lands upon the deck and steadies himself at the rail, while the lines with weights and grappling hooks are lowered. As they appear he takes them and shuffles clumsily along the deck, flashing his lamp along the cabin doors until

he reaches Cabin Eighteen, which is in the center of the scene. He secures the lines to the rail, then, taking an axe from his belt, he forces open the door of Cabin Eighteen. It yields slowly, then he disappears within, reappearing almost immediately with the body of his wife.

The body appears to float rigidly at the top of the cabin door. It is clad in a filmy nightrobe and the long hair streams out. BRICE lowers the body tenderly to the deck, kneels and weights it. He shows great agitation and infinite tenderness as he kneels beside it. Then gently and reverently he makes fast the lines.

During this, the cabin door of Number Eighteen has been opening and closing

with the action of the water. As BRICE kneels in worship before the body of his wife, a second body, that of a man, floats past BRICE as he kneels.

He starts, looks back, sees that the only door open is that of his wife's cabin, starts as if to follow the man's body, which has floated off, then looks down at the body of his wife and realizes that it is the body of her lover that has come between them. In a mad rage he draws his knife and cuts the lashings from the weighted body, then, realizing he has worshiped a false goddess, he draws the knife across his own airpipe. The bubbles dart upward, he sways, then sinks in a tottering heap beside his wife's body on the deck.

CURTAIN



## AT THE LATTICE

By Archibald Sullivan

WHO spangled thy eyes with gold?  
Who?

Who formed thy hands on a jeweled mold  
Of moonstone and pearl and a lily's soft fold  
Of white movement?  
Who?

Who kissed thy mouth to its red?  
Who?

Coral tint, blossom sweet, bud of dread,  
Life of the living, loss of the dead,  
Envy of all,  
Who?

Where shall I find thee a slave?  
Where?

Brother to moonlight, son to the wave,  
Worthy to worship whatever you gave,  
Where?

Spurn me with one of thy feet,  
Now.

In the hush of the wood—in the crowd of the street,  
Scorn from thee maketh life sweet,  
Now.

# LE PRÉCIEUX FARDEAU

Par Florian-Parmentier

**P**AUL GERBEAU aimait mystifier ses amis. Ses amis, le sachant, ne s'y laissaient plus prendre. Mais comme c'était un excellent homme, plus maniaque en somme que rusé, ils jouaient quelquefois les dupes pour lui faire plaisir.

Cet été-là, Gerbeau passait ses vacances dans les Vosges avec Fouquet, un ancien camarade de régiment, et Davel, un vieil ami de collège. Les trois compagnons avaient choisi, comme centre de leurs opérations, Gérardmer. De là, ils se proposaient de rayonner, d'un côté, sur tout le pays qu'arrose la Vologne, de l'autre, sur la vallée de Munster.

Le lendemain même de leur arrivée fut consacré à une ascension sur la Schlucht.

Aujourd'hui, comme chacun sait, les ascensions se font commodément assis dans un tramway funiculaire. Nos touristes prirent donc le tramway, non sans s'être, au préalable, attaché chacun un sac dans le dos, pour se donner "de l'allure."

Sur le parcours, les sites pittoresques, les torrents, les cascades ne manquaient pas; en sorte qu'ils arrivèrent sans ennui au bout du voyage.

Ils prirent le parti, parvenus à peu près au sommet, de suivre à pied la route de la Schlucht jusqu'au relai de la diligence, afin de jouir du splendide panorama qui se déroule sur la vallée des lacs de Longemer et de Retournemer.

En passant sous la Roche du Diable, Fouquet et Davel remarquèrent que Gerbeau détachait un fragment du rocher et le mettait dans sa poche.

— Ce sera un souvenir, dit-il. Je

collerai, sur cette pierre, une étiquette avec la provenance et la date.

Ses compagnons firent un geste d'indifférence et reprirent leur marche. Gerbeau continua:

— J'ai des pierres de tous les pays par lesquels je suis passé. Aussi, je me flatte d'avoir d'assez appréciables connaissances en lithologie. J'ai du silex, du basalte, de l'ardoise, du feldspath, du spath, du porphyre, différentes sortes de marbre, des stalagmites, des galets, des fossiles . . . J'ai même un aérolithe!

— Alors, tu collectionnes, fit Fouquet.

— Eh oui, comme tu vois.

— C'est une idée intéressante, assura Davel. Et ton aérolithe, s'il est authentique. . .

— Tout ce qu'il y a de plus authentique, mon cher. Je l'ai vu tomber à mes pieds!

L'effet fut foudroyant, car Fouquet et Davel, à leur tour, laissèrent tomber . . . la conversation.

Le soleil commençait à devenir ardent. Les voyageurs furent heureux de prendre place dans l'omnibus. Ils arrivèrent ainsi, après avoir passé près des sources de la Meurthe, à un hôtel à cheval sur la frontière—comme les gendarmes allemands sur la consigne.

Après un bon repas, ils reprirent leur route, pour se rendre au Hoheneck,—à 1.365 mètres d'altitude! Le pays devenait de plus en plus pittoresque. Ils avaient maintenant de profonds ravins à leur droite, des cimes escarpées à leur gauche.

Au tunnel de Munster—une énorme roche perforée, comme la Roche du Diable—Gerbeau voulut encore emporter un morceau du granit.

— Il faudrait les étiqueter de suite,

pour ne pas les confondre plus tard, fit remarquer Fouquet, qui souriait dans sa barbe.

Le collectionneur marqua, en effet, ses pierres de traits de crayon.

— Vous devriez faire comme moi, dit-il à ses amis. Si vous saviez avec quel plaisir on se rappelle les étapes de ses voyages en regardant ces simples cailloux.

— Les cailloux du Petit Poucet, observa Davel.

— J'aime mieux me les rappeler à l'aide de cartes postales, répondit Fouquet.

— Pour moi, reprit Davel, je ne m'embarrasserais de souvenirs qui pèsent à ce point que si je trouvais quelque chose de rare . . . un aérolithe, par exemple . . . ou du pétunzé.

— Du pétunzé? Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça? interrogea Gerbeau.

— C'est une pierre extrêmement rare, et fort recherchée des potiers d'art, parce que, travaillée, elle imite à s'y méprendre la porcelaine de Chine. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas absolument impossible d'en rencontrer ici, car le peu que nous en avons en France se trouve précisément dans les Vosges.

— Diantre! fit Gerbeau, tu es calé, toi!

— Oui, mon cher; mais je ne m'en vante pas.

On arrivait à l'endroit où il faut quitter la route de Munster et choisir soit le sentier français, soit la route carrossable alsacienne.

— Qu'en dites-vous, mes amis? demanda Gerbeau. Le sentier? La route?

— Le sentier! dirent ensemble Fouquet et Davel.

On s'engagea donc, par un étroit chemin rocailleux, à travers des éventrements de roche et de brusques ressauts de terrain. La chaleur était de plus en plus torride. Les trois voyageurs marchaient silencieusement, en écoutant se répercuter l'appel plaintif des pâtres dans la montagne.

Tout à coup, Davel, qui marchait en avant, s'arrêta en poussant des cris de joie.

Gerbeau et Fouquet s'étaient approchés.

— Du pétunzé! leur dit-il, en montrant une sorte de granit léproisé de larges taches blanches. Du pétunzé!

— Tu es sûr? demanda Gerbeau.

— Sûr et *certain* répondit-il d'un air aussi ravi que s'il venait de découvrir un trésor.

Et, débouclant les épaulières de son sac, il prit un solide couteau et se mit à gratter la terre, pour déterrer l'une des moraines. Presque aussitôt, Fouquet l'imita, avec une ardeur qui surprit un peu Gerbeau.

— Mais, enfin, me direz-vous ce que vous avez l'intention de faire de cette pierre?

— Pas de la mettre dans ta collection, bien sûr! gouailla Fouquet.

— Tu n'as pas l'air de te douter, fit Davel en haussant les épaules, qu'un bloc de pétunzé comme celui que je vais mettre dans mon sac peut se vendre deux ou trois cents francs!

— Deux ou trois cents francs! Fichtre! s'écria Gerbeau.

Et il se mit à gratter le sol à son tour.

Quand les trois amis se furent chargés chacun d'un gros morceau de roche, ils reprirent leur route d'un pas moins assuré, baissant l'échine sous les traits implacables d'un soleil incandescent.

Il y avait à peine dix minutes qu'ils marchaient de la sorte que Gerbeau, ruisselant de sueur, s'arrêtait pour s'éponger le front.

— C'est égal, dit-il; je n'aurai pas volé mes trois cents francs, quand j'arriverai à l'hôtel!

— Tu y penses déjà? fit Davel. Tu n'es pas au bout de tes peines, alors.

Arrivés à l'écho d'Auslicht, nos voyageurs regagnèrent, par les Trois-Chaumes, la route carrossable, afin d'atteindre plus aisément la cime du Hoheneck avec leur fardeau.

La chaleur leur paraissait devenue tropicale, lestés comme ils l'étaient à présent. Gerbeau, qui avait un commencement d'asthme, souffrait beaucoup plus encore que ses compagnons. Et il répétait sans cesse, en soufflant bruyamment:

— C'est égal! j'ai déjà gagné mes trois cents francs!

Une fois, il ajouta, avec un regard



d'admiration pour chacun de ses deux amis :

— Mais, ma parole, on dirait que plus vous avancez, moins vous êtes fatigués, vous autres !

— Dame ! c'est l'entraînement, répondit Fouquet.

Depuis quelque temps, Gerbeau songeait à se débarrasser de sa charge ; mais il n'osait exprimer son idée tout haut.

A quelques centaines de mètres du sommet, il se décida à consulter Davel.

— Comme tu voudras, lui dit celui-ci. Mais nous voilà presque arrivés. Pour redescendre, tu seras poussé par ton sac, et tu n'en marcheras que plus vite.

Parvenus enfin au haut du Hohe-neck, Fouquet et Davel se mirent à consulter la table d'orientation pour reconnaître les points qu'ils apercevaient dans le recul de l'horizon.

Mais Gerbeau avait hâte d'entrer à la buvette et de se désaltérer. Il était en nage. Il était fourbu. La perspective d'une bonne heure de répit devant un large bock le séduisait davantage, en ce moment, que tous les panoramas du monde.

Quand il eut pris assez de repos pour

se sentir la force de penser, il fut soudain visité par une idée qui le fit sourire.

Les trois touristes avaient déposé leurs bagages contre la paroi de planches, à l'extérieur de la buvette. Gerbeau sortit, ouvrit son sac, en tira le bloc de pierre, et déboucla le sac de Fouquet, dans l'intention de le charger d'un double fardeau. Mais il ne fut pas peu surpris en trouvant ce sac vide. Il ouvrit alors celui de Davel et le trouva vide également.

— Nous sommes volés ! s'écria-t-il, en rentrant précipitamment dans la buvette.

— Volés ? firent ses amis, qui avaient compris.

— Mais oui : nous avons laissé nos sacs dehors, et le pétunzé, le précieux pétunzé n'y est plus.

Fouquet éclata de rire.

Mais Davel, imperturbable, demanda :

— Tu n'as plus le tien ?

— Mais si.

— Ah ! . . . C'est que, vois-tu, j'allais te donner le conseil de ne pas trop t'en désoler. Fouquet et moi, nous nous sommes dit depuis longtemps que nous n'étions pas au Japon, et que, décidément, cette pierre ne pouvait être du pétunzé !



## LE MATIN

Par Théodore de Banville

**VIENS.** Sur tes cheveux noirs jette un chapeau de paille.

Avant l'heure du bruit, l'heure où chacun travaille,

Allons voir le matin se lever sur les monts

Et cueillir par les prés les fleurs que nous aimons.

Sur les bords de la source aux moires assouplies

Les nénuphars dorés penchent des fleurs pâlies ;

Il reste dans les champs et dans les grands vergers

Comme un écho lointain des chansons des bergers,

Et, secouant pour nous leurs ailes odorantes,

Les brises du matin, comme des sœurs errantes,

Jettent déjà vers toi, tandis que tu souris,

L'odeur du pêcher rose et des pommiers fleuris.

## WASTE FIRELIGHT

By Fannie Stearns Davis

I LIT the fire for you alone,  
And then you never came.  
The Others sat here, while the blown  
Red rapture of the flame

Swept up the chimney to the night.  
They sat and looked at me.  
They found me fair by that firelight  
You never came to see.

The Others love me more than you;  
Yet I was angry. I  
Knelt down beside the hearth and blew  
The brands to make them die.

Love is a foolish, jealous thing.  
I would not have them share  
The flame that I set glorying  
For you, who do not care!



## I NEVER KNEW

By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

I NEVER knew the days could be so long,  
I never knew the sky could be so gray,  
I never knew the sea could lose its song—  
Until you went away.

I never knew how dark could be the night,  
I never knew how blossomless the May,  
I never knew that Beauty could take flight—  
Until you went away.

I never knew that life could be so drear,  
I never knew Love should be coaxed to stay,  
I never knew—oh, sweet, I need you near!—  
Until you went away!

# TOUJOURS SHAW

By George Jean Nathan

**I**N the light of recent developments, there would appear to be two schools of dramatic critics: those who know that George Bernard Shaw is the greatest living playwright and admit it, and those who know that George Bernard Shaw is the greatest living playwright and deny it. The first body is composed of dramatic critics; the second, of dramatic critics who are profoundly moved by the dramas of Miss Catherine Chisholm Cushing, hence not dramatic critics—or old critics, which is generally much the same thing.

In bygone days, as Huneker, I believe, has observed, all a young man had to do to achieve a reputation was to mount a box in the public square and lustily disclaim belief in a Divine Being. Of course, as we all know, things have so greatly changed since then that all the young man would have to do today would be to climb atop the same box and announce his belief in a Divine Being. The acquisition of celebrity in the current community has, however, in the case of young men become an even simpler performance than this. Today, approximately all your young man need do to establish himself as a considerable figure is to keep moderately quiet—and wait. In due time there inevitably will come along some old fellow engaged in the same profession who, in an endeavor to recall attention to himself in this crowding, pushing age, will deliver himself of a sufficient number of absurd opinions indirectly to guarantee the perspicacity and position of his young colleague.

Speaking particularly of critics of the drama, Shaw may be said in an oblique

way to have been instrumental in unmaking more old reputations and making more new reputations than Ibsen, Nietzsche or even Evelyn Nesbit Thaw. For every old critic who has died in battle for Pinero against Shaw, a young critic has been born to estate. For every old critic who has stuck manfully to the guns of "technique" against the guns of ideas, a young critic has been brevetted. With every old critic whose loyal heart has gone still to Tosca in jilt of Dora Delaney, there has been created a further estimation for some younger professional associate. Shaw has worked for the young critics while they slept. Or rather while the older critics slept.

The old boys have fought against him to no avail, even despite their lack of wit—an attribute that usually guarantees the popular success and wide influence of criticism in the Anglo-Saxon states. The young men, realizing that though, true enough, this same Shaw was no Hauptmann in rare dramaturgic versatility and varied grace, no François de Curel of the passions, no Tolstoi, nor even Gorki, in the distilling of visualized human hearts, no Galsworthy of the suaver parts of speech—nor yet a character dissector of the amiable penetration of an Arthur Schnitzler, nor yet a blithesome metaphysician of the too widely depreciated quality of Molnar—this same Shaw was, in their time and his, the most quivering, vibrating man in the world's theater.

For his was the position as first coadjutor since Ibsen to practise with auspicious regularity at amusing the theater through the intellect as against the emotions, as first to have successfully introduced into the theater of his

day a stage refreshed at his almost every touch with technical novelty, piquing attitude and a super-Wildean wit. The first, moreover, systematically to remember that words ever speak louder than actions in the quick delineation of character (Schnitzler has learned this recently to his advantage. See "Professor Bernhardt"); the first, moreover, again to infuse a theater youthful in spots with a pervading youth that presently was to be felt round the globe—felt and imitated in his own country by such honest, if comparatively inept, strivers as the Barkers and Bennetts and Hastingses and Besiers; in Germany by the Wedekinds and Herbert Eulenberg and Ludwig Thomas and Otto Soykas; in France by the Brieuxs (the influence of Shaw on Brieux is at once obvious to the discriminator between such early things as "Blanchette" and such later pieces as "Damaged Goods"—also to anyone who appreciates the sly humor of Shaw's eulogy of Brieux) and the Donnays and by the little Gabriel Trarieux; in Austria by the Bahrs (see "Die Mutter"—influenced by Shaw via Wedekind; see "Das Tänzchen"; see parts of "The Yellow Nightingale") and the Felix Saltens; in Russia by the Tchekhovs and (via Germany) the Leo Birinskis; in Ireland by the Lennox Robinsons and George Birmingham; in Scotland by the Graham Moffats—and on. From Arnold Bennett's "What the Public Wants" and "The Great Adventure" on through the whole of Barker; from Macdonald Hastings' "New Sin" and "Love and What Then?" on through Besier's "Don" and "Lady Patricia"; from Thoma's "Moral" (see "Mrs. Warren") through a nice slice of Wedekind and from G. Hermann's "Wüstling" (see "The Philanderer") to Freksa's "Der Fette Caesar" (see "Caesar and Cleopatra"); from the later Brieux across the frontiers to the "Narrentanz" of Birinski and thence northwest through the "Patriots" of Robinson and a measure of the Irish prose plays—there is breathed, true, here and there only faintly, but breathed still, the impudent scent of the influence

of the man whose early critical tourneys in the *Saturday Review* foreshadowed the obtaining of a new contemplation of the theater—of a theater that should be at once artistic and practical, of a drama that should be neither mere drama nor mere literature, but of a drama that should be at once drama and literature.

That Shaw possesses the truly staggering plasticity of Hauptmann it were absurd to claim. That, work for work, his record is the peer of the German's it might be equally futile to contend. But that the influence of the Shaw dramatic mind as opposed to the Hauptmann dramatic heart has not been a more vigorous, a more inspiriting and a more blood-giving theatrical one constitutes a different decision on the debate. Hauptmann, the pioneer of "Before Sunrise" and "Beaver Coat" days (*Dear Mencken: Are you not in error in your contention that Hauptmann in the former work gave Germany its first naturalistic, or realistic, drama? See Johannes Schlaf, in collaboration with Arno Holz—"Papa Hamlet"; also the same dramatists' "Familie Selicke," which directly influenced Hauptmann*), has in these, his later years, declined steadily into the comparative unimportance of "Gabriel Schilling" and "The Bow of Ulysses." The trail blazer, as all trail blazers, has seen another than himself strike easily ahead on the path he has laboriously opened and decorate the clearing.

Shaw has brought humor to what, though so regarded, was never tragedy. He has used the stage as a tool instead of permitting the stage so to use him. (Hauptmann only twice or thrice has done as much.) He has rid the theater, so far as any one man has dared, of its mighty platitudes. He has been no great "thinker," true, but he has at least been a nimble thinker—and where in the theater is there today such another? He has taught the theater not to stand in awe of itself; he has given it the self-confidence his immediate associates had sought (and successfully) to take from it. And he has, from first to last, been interesting in spite of all



this. One of our venerable metropolitan critics has lately observed that young men believe that to admire Shaw is to be considered "clever." Well, well, old dear, let us rather have such "cleverness" than the absence of "cleverness" attaching to an admiration of Charles Klein!

After which lavish hymn, let us be quick to announce that this Shaw's latest play, "PYGMALION," though certainly one of the two wittiest things come out of the foreign or native theaters this season (only "Der Leibgardist" of Molnar can match it), is yet a disappointment to those of us young fellows who look always (in our damnable "cleverness") for Shaw successively to out-Shaw himself. Such, however, is ever the critical attitude. The better the play, the more the sedulous critic is inclined elaborately to search out its deficiencies. The better the play, the greater the challenge to the critic. Anybody, even some of our New York newspaper critics, can easily appear critically brilliant over the plays in which Miss Billie Burke acts—which is to say, bad plays. Such a feat is absurdly simple. A poor play gives the critical mind no fight. The battle is wholly one-sided. The man who would employ such an occasion critically to exercise his humorous talents would be likely to laugh at a funeral, a comedy by Cicely Hamilton or some other such sad happening in the lives of his fellow mortals. But, confronted by a play of positive merit, your critics must protect themselves and save their faces by one of two means: either boldly to dismiss the play as being no good at all and "consequently not deserving of serious criticism" (a familiar trick which permits the critic to maintain his reputation by reverting to his established custom of contemplating jocosely a bad play), or to admit the play is a good one and then devote several hours of hard extra work to ferreting out the play's potential defects. One of the favorite critical expedients (in England as in America) in the criticizing of a Shaw play is the first of these two means.

Although "PYGMALION" is not of the same quality as Shaw's other recent play, "Androcles and the Lion"—and not to be compared with such of his lustrous products as "Cæsar and Cleopatra," "Man and Superman" and the like—I frankly confess to having been prejudiced in its favor before my eyes were set upon it. News of its theme had already been wafted to my chamber, and by virtue of the circumstance that here was a thesis that long had been a personal hobby with me—I had, indeed, spent a whole summer abroad several years ago in experiments associated with it—my partiality was to be the more clearly comprehended. What Shaw has here negotiated is an unplatitudinous dramatization of the platitude that what one says doesn't count so much as the manner in which one says it. This, the especial Shaw knack. Give him a platitude and he will build you a fresher, greener play out of it than the vast majority of his fellow dramatists will be able to derive out of a proportionately brilliant thematic novelty. "PYGMALION" is, in truth, almost in the nature of a dare! Shaw has taken for it the most ancient materials that the cobwebbed files of the theater contain, and out of these materials has created a play which gives his audiences every impression of something quite new and startling. Here, of course, as Hatteras has aptly observed, the celebrated Shaw secret: the ability to put the obvious in terms of the scandalous.

What we have as basis for "PYGMALION" is nothing more than the glutinous "Sis Hopkins" story, that veteran of countless stage engagements which almost every playwright sooner or later sometime in his career writes, either in its entirety or in part, all over again. Having its genesis in "Cinderella," this theme—the dowdy baggage transformed into a wench of fashion—has done brave service on the stage for generation after generation. Recall merely a few instances at memory's right hand where the basic stuff of the theme has figured in some degree or other: "The Marriage of Kitty,"

"Smith" (second act), "The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary," "The Real Thing," "Kitty MacKay," "Peg o' My Heart," "Years of Discretion," "The Marionettes," "The Wishing Ring," "Fanchon," "Merely Mary Ann," "Lena Rivers," "Caprice," "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine," "The Lady from Oklahoma," "Rachel," "Eliza Comes to Stay," "Prunella." And think of the innumerable "Belle of New York" species of music show "books" in which the main ingredient of the thing has appeared! Consider the libretti of the last two seasons alone: "Sari," "The Belle of Bond Street" ("The Girl from Kay's"), "Sweethearts," "The Little Café," "The Purple Road," "The Sunshine Girl," "The Lady and the Slipper," "Eva," "The Red Petticoat," "The Gypsy"—memory cannot contain them all. The old story: Act I—poor girl, poor dress; Act III—rich girl, rich dress. My terms are general, but my meaning remains nonetheless particular. Then, as if these materials were not sufficiently stale to make his "dare" seem properly spectacular, Shaw piled Pelion on Ossa by topping this basic trash with the perennial platitude already referred to.

And what the result? A farce brighter, quicker with humor and satire and perforating philosophy, more tensely athrob with novelty and thematic interest than even the rival Hauptmann himself was able in "Schluck and Jau" to build out of materials a thousand times more fertile and fresh. Against "PYGMALION," at bottom, may be directed the remark of the man who, coming out of the Lyceum Theater after witnessing a performance of the pure-girl-cave-man-I-hate-you-I-have-grown-to-love-you fable called "The Land of Promise," observed that every darned time he went into a theater he saw this play. What say you then of a dramatist who, despite an equally trite set of tools, has yet made "PYGMALION," as it in its totality flashes across the footlights, the talk of four world capitals?

In an earlier paragraph, I mentioned certain previous personally conducted

experiments as to the soundness of the theory that any girl—yes, even an American girl—may be made moderately interesting if she gets someone to doctor up her speaking voice. These experiments, which would seem to be acutely relevant to the present critical subject, had to do with a clinical effort to determine the relative intensity of the emotion kindled in one by the professions of adoration on the part of maidens representative of each of six different countries—the United States, England, Germany, France, Austria and Italy. After a series of experiments with some three or four hundred young ladies of these various nationalities, experiments conducted through the employment of the pianoforte and the articulation on the part of each of the three or four hundred of the words "I love you," I deduced that, were the speaking voices of the different young ladies to be transferred to the keyboard, their respective "I love you's" would be as follows:

1. I love yuh (American)—d c c (*allegro giusto*).
2. I love you (English)—d d# d# (*freddamente*).
3. Ich liebe dich (German)—c cc c (*moderatissimo*).
4. Je vous aime (French)—c# d f (*pp*).
5. Ish lieb' dish (Austrian)—d a a (*ornatamente*).
6. T'amo tanto (Italian)—c c c# c# (*ff*).

These notes, then, were found to contain what soul—or lack thereof—reposed in the amorous responses of the different young women. Now if you will play these notes in turn in the manner indicated on the keyboard, you will quickly discover what I discovered: that your heart will respond most quickly to the vocal tones of the French girl. *Actually* respond. And why? Because the vocal tones of this French brand of baggage are the precise tones that may scientifically be discovered to induce sympathetic vibrations (or wave movements) of the endolymph, hence the fibers of the basilar membrane, and hence what are colloquially known as

the "heart strings." As is well known, the cross-fibers of the membrane of the cochlea of the internal ear are similar to the strings upon the backboard of a piano, short at the beginning (these, the treble strings) and gradually increasing in length as the membrane continues (to the bass strings). I may, therefore, illustrate the effect of the French girl's voice upon the ear strings (and via the ear strings upon the "heart strings") by asking you to imagine this girl and each of the girls of the other nationalities mentioned speaking their "I love you's" into the body of an upright piano, the top of which has been thrown back.

Through such a test—one familiar to psychologists in the experimenting generally with the quality of auditory sensations—it will be found that, as the speaking voice contains certain tones to which the piano strings are "tuned," the strings (or notes) indicated in the table of notes deduced by me originally will duly be thrown into vibration and set ringing. Wherefore, as has been stated, as the ear strings correspond to the piano strings, it follows that the former will be set ringing in the same relative manner. Then, moreover, as the human heart (via these strings) is quickest to respond to the notes *c* *♯* *d* *f* pianissimo, it follows as a conclusion that it is the French girl's speaking voice, rather than the French girl, that so invariably provokes in the male of the cosmic species a feeling of interest where the speaking voices of other nations and the girls behind those voices are proportionately unsuccessful in the achievement.

But my experiments did not stop here. In order to assure myself that my prefatory convictions were absolutely correct, I spent one whole month training an American girl, an English girl, an Austrian girl, a German girl and an Italian girl to speak the words "I love you" as the French girl speaks them, *i. e.*, in the tones of *c* *♯* *d* *f*. This accomplished, I caused myself to be blindfolded and to be approached in turn by each of these five representative maidens and the original French

girl, each of whom repeated to me their "I love you's." And—Eureka! I found that, although I had in the process of the previous experiments begun to feel amorously partial toward the French girl (via her speaking voice), I now responded to each one of the girls in precisely the same degree! In other words, blindfolded and not knowing which of the young ladies was speaking, inasmuch as their voices were now one and all of a similar melliflence, I found that I became scientifically attracted to one as greatly as to another. When one realizes that the human ear is capable of 11,600 different sensation qualities, the weight of the human positiveness of my experiment becomes the more obvious. It seems only fair to admit, however, that we learn from E. B. Titchener, from E. Mach's "Contributions to the Analysis of Sensations," from Helmholtz's "Sensations of Tone" and from Hermann's "Physiol. d. Gehörs," that the experiment may be conducted with equal relevance and success by testing the effect of the tones on dogs.

To return to "PYGMALION." As if by way of double-dare, Shaw seems deliberately to have taken for his sub-structure H. V. Esmond's play "Eliza Comes to Stay," a scrupulously morose gewgaw that ran half a season not so long ago in London. He has even called his heroine Eliza! Having taken Esmond's piece, Shaw appears to have rolled up his cuffs and observed: "I will now show you, ladies and gentlemen, the difference between a hack playwright and one who really knows the trade." And having delivered himself of this comment, he has proceeded to inject "the voice makes the woman" theory into Esmond's plot in place of Esmond's inference that "the clothes make the woman." And so auspiciously has Shaw turned the tables that I doubt not he could even take a play by Henri Bernstein and, by injecting sense into it, make it partly interesting.

I shall be entertained to note the difficulty that must obtain in finding an actress to play the part of Eliza in America. A thousand such will be available effectively to render Eliza in

the earlier stages of the piece where Eliza's mispronunciations and articulations are properly ear-shattering, but where the actress (with a few exceptions) to play the fourth and fifth act Eliza who must speak the English language with correctness and distinction? To Rudolf Christians, Herr Direktor of the German Theater in Irving Place, who produced the Shaw play for the first time in this country, my salute! This German Theater of his, incidentally, is probably the one playhouse in the Greater City of New York into which a theatergoer may haphazardly enter and not become metamorphosed instantaneously into a patron of the moving pictures.

Although I may be bequeathing to Mr. Monckton Hoffe an idea he did not possess, it yet seems to me that he meant his boldly borrowed play "PANTHEA" as a suggestion of the adventure we've never had. Inasmuch as the adventures we've never had—such dear, impossible adventures as are born to us out of our daydreams or out of an audience with too many seidels or from a flying vision through the window of a hurrying Continental railway carriage—are really the only adventures infused with romance of lingering and authentic vitality, it should not follow that the attempt at a stage creation of such a more or less obvious, albeit jeweled, texture present the playwright with a particularly difficult feat. Alas, however, for our logic! Against the playwright's efforts so to cajole the romantic sense of his spectators is interposed not so much the latter's imagination (the knack-gifted dramatist may stroke such imagination as he wills), as their taste in the matter of the human form. Let me make myself clearer. The most adept theatrical scrivener of romance in the seven kingdoms cannot fight against the effect produced upon his audience's eye by the *person* of the actor or actress cast for his leading role. Be his play soever persuasive, soever hypnotic, soever alluring to the romantic sense in manuscript, in its stage presentation it will be unable to plead with and to that sense if the feminine taste of that

sense cannot stomach Mr. Milton Sills as the hero of its dreams and the masculine taste feel like leaving home for Madame Olga Petrova.

Taste in human forms and romance are utterly and finally interdependent. Thus, where my colleague Mencken insists he can feel no thrill of romance in the theater save upon the contemplation of a brunette weighing at least two hundred and twenty-five pounds, I, on the other hand, admit to no romantic tingle save at the sight of a blonde weighing something less than one hundred and fifteen. And so the business varies in the instance of nine men out of ten. How, then, may a playwright or producer hope to engender a successful effect out of the manuscript of a romantic drama of the species under consideration in the bosoms of such a naturally diversified body as a theatrical audience? In the case of the playwright who essays merely to do a so-called "romantic play," which is to say, a play presenting to us the species of romance we *have* experienced, things are, of course, much simpler. The actual "adventures" of nine men out of ten—or nine women out of ten—are so commonplace, so assiduously real, so destitute of even fugitive romance, that actors may be found growing on every bush to look like them.

If we require any better proof of the fact that there is no such thing in the world as actual romance, need we look further into our hearts than the divers theatrical stratagems we consciously employ to hocus ourselves into believing there is? Thus, we are ever fond of associating gypsies with romance, when everyone knows that gypsies are, as they always have been, merely so many foul-smelling, filthy, ignorant, drab tramps. And Monte Carlo! As prosy a card parlor as Dick Canfield's old place in the forties. The only souls who speak of Monte Carlo and romance are the cockneys of the home fireside. And the "romance of Paris under the springtime moon with the soft warm wind come down from Longchamps"! Oh, I myself have written it—often! But only pleasantly to impress the folk



who have never been there. And "far-off princesses"! Have you ever seen photographs of some of them? The last "far-off princess" I met—a Servian—was a gamey wench of thirty-seven or thereabouts with a mustache and a penchant for green stockings, King's size cigarettes and onions boiled in cheese. And the wonderful Blue Danube! A thousand migratory yokels have already given its secret away—as wonderful as the Raritan, as blue as the topaz. And the "romance of the high seas"! From the shore. And the "romance of love"—as if a man never stops to think that, when he makes love to a woman, what he is actually making love to is merely his own imagination: "woman—half woman, half dream," as Tagore phrases it. . . . But have done with such absurd schoolboy cynicisms! . . . Spring is on the world again, and the music of quivering Vienna whispers its way across the eastern frontier—and Hulda waits under the linden trees.

Well, well, I seem almost to have forgotten that I am supposed to be a dramatic critic! So, then: "PANTHEA's" chief merits rest in its exaggerations (thus only may romance be distilled), in its sporadic instances of happy writing, in its air of thorough unreality. Its defects are coincident with a seriously posed re-manipulation of the antiquated Sardou nonsense and with the intrusion into the script of such greasy theatricalisms as "let us go out into the world together—we two, alone," as the Augustus Thomas brand of sentimentality concerning "a man's big work can be accomplished only under the influence of a woman," as the ultimate cheapening device of converting tragedy into a honeyed outcome in order to woo the ignorant applause of the mooncalves. Mr. Huffman's staging of the manuscript has been accomplished with a skill and discernment infrequently to be encountered in the local proscenium maneuvering with a play of this genre, his legerdemain in the matter of lighting and movement bringing out effectively the necessary remoteness and air-drawn extravaganza of the play's mood.

Before such piddling débris as a play called "JERRY"—the work of the Miss Cushing whose quality I have already hereinbefore unchivalrously but pertinently designated—I confess to a condition of complete rout. In the first place, although I know perfectly well from personal observation that the play was actually produced, I simply cannot persuade myself to believe that it was. I have sat down and argued loudly with myself for hours at a time that I certainly must be wrong: did I not, forsooth, see the play at the Lyceum Theater with my own eyes, and did not Charles Frohman put it on?—and to convince myself further I have dug the program embellished with my notes from out the desk—but somehow I cannot get myself to agree that the piece was ever presented. Something gets the better of me every time. A play so supremely bad as "JERRY," I tell myself, simply couldn't have been produced, even by Mr. Frohman! Such a thing were impossible. Indeed, not only have I persuaded myself to believe that "JERRY" was never produced, but I have even succeeded in bringing myself to the conclusion that it was never written. No one *could* write such a play. I do not except Mr. Joseph Byron Totten. Realizing, therefore, that no playwright or producer could possibly be possessed of sufficient bravado to write or present such a piece, let us imagine what might have occurred in the hypothetical case of its creation and presentation.

Initially, were anyone to write a play like "JERRY," it would probably follow that Miss Billie Burke would in due time act it. The worse the play, the more certain is it to become a "vehicle" for Miss Burke. Hence the expression "a typical Billie Burke play." How Miss Burke possibly escaped appearing in "The Dear Fool" in America, I am at a loss to comprehend. But to return to such a play as might be "JERRY," were it believable that it could be written or produced. In the first place, such an exhibit would unquestionably revolve about an ill-mannered young hoyden who, being ill-mannered, would

doubtless be pleasurably regarded by the audience as being "full of life." "Full of life," in the local theater, means merely that the person so described is exceptionally vulgar. This young baggage would fall in love with her aunt's fiancé and, by copying the *modus operandi* of the heroine of "Man and Superman" (the invariable practice, in all similar cases, of our home made heroines), would eventually contrive to ensnare that worthy. She would, incidentally, beyond all question of doubt, appear in one of the acts in silk pajamas, and probably hop in and out of a bed by way of impressing the audience that she was a "vivacious little devil." In the first act of such a play there would be several jocose allusions to Kansas City on the part of the heroine, whose mother (made a highly proper and aristocratic personage for "contrast") would thereupon observe: "Oh, Jerry, will you never behave? What (with a hopeless gesture) am I ever going to do with you?" In the second act, Jerry would secretly announce to the papers that her aunt's fiancé had broken his engagement in order to marry her; and then the playwright would provide some excruciating comedy through having each of the characters (except the butler) in turn accuse the other of having done the dastardly deed—Jerry in the meantime standing upstage and indicating her amusement at the general consternation by making faces. The dialogue of this scene would be something like this:

JOAN, the aunt (to her cousin Peter): You did it!

PETER (airily): You accuse me?

JERRY'S MOTHER: Yes, I believe Peter did it!

PETER (with mock seriousness): Oh, how can you? I think Joan did it.

JOAN (indignantly): I! How dare you?

MONTY, the fiancé: I, too, think Joan did it!

JOAN: I did it? Ridiculous!! (Stamps her foot in disgust.)

PETER: Then who did it?

JERRY'S MOTHER (with a sudden inspiration): Monty! He did it!

MONTY: Absurd! Why should I do it?

JOAN: Brute! I'm certain now that you did it!

PETER (comically): Well, I didn't do it.

MONTY (turning on him): By George, I think you did do it!

JOAN: Yes, Peter must have done it!

JERRY'S MOTHER (in tears): Oh, Peter, how could you do it?

PETER (protesting): But I did not do it!

JOAN: Then who did do it?

MONTY: That's what I'd like to know: who did it?

JERRY'S MOTHER: Yes, if Peter did not do it and Monty did not do it, who did do it?

MONTY (a light breaking in upon him): Jerry did it!!

JERRY (in mock surprise): I did it?

MONTY: Yes, you did it!

JOAN (weeping): To think Jerry did it!

JERRY'S MOTHER: Oh, Jerry, how could you do it?

PETER (ironically): Yes, Jerry, how could you do it?

Et cetera, ad infinitum.

If there are any persons who can still believe that material like this could be written and produced in this Year of Our Lord 1914, all that I can say is that they must be regular patrons of the New York theaters! Deliberating upon the quality of histrionism in the delusion named "JERRY," I am impressed with the idea that the only roles uniformly well acted on our current stages are those of the butlers.

Miss Margaret Anglin's neutrally performed but finely staged revival of the diamond-bright "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN" was instrumental in weaning the more broad-minded element of the community temporarily from its rapt devotion to the prevalent theatrical form of wit that has to do with mistaking a ship's lights at sea for a drug-store. What a surcease here from the droll allusion to Peruna (evenings at 8:15. Matinees Wed. and Sat. at 2:15)! What a sabbatical two hours from the excruciating reference to the Saturday night tub (Popular price matinee Thursday at 2:30)! What a release from the side-splitting innuendo as to the lugubrious mien of Brooklyn (Tickets on sale ten weeks in advance)! "There is nothing like the devotion of a married woman—it is something no married man knows anything about." Such, the wit of the theater of Wilde. "I got a dill pickle compass. . . . What's that for? . . . You put it on the pickle to tell which way it's going to squirt." Such, the wit of ours.

# THE ANATOMY OF THE NOVEL

By H. L. Mencken

**D**ISCOURSING in this place so long ago as the year 1909 of the present or Christian era, I made a plain bid for the applause of the learned with the following definition of the novel:

A novel is an imaginative, artistic and undialectic composition in prose, not less than 20,000 nor more than 500,000 words in length, and divided into chapters, sections, books or other symmetrical parts, in which certain interesting, significant and probable (though fictitious) human transactions are described both in cause and in effect, with particular reference to the influence exerted upon the ideals, opinions, morals, temperaments and overt acts of some specified person or persons by the laws, institutions, superstitions, traditions and customs of such portions of the human race and the natural phenomena of such portions of the earth as may come under his, her or their observation or cognizance, and by the ideals, opinions, morals, temperaments and overt acts of such person or persons as may come into contact, either momentarily or for longer periods, with him, her or them, either by actual, social, political or business intercourse, or through the medium of books, newspapers, the church, the theater or some other person or persons.

This definition was a very fair specimen of lexicography—in 1909. But human knowledge has made great progress during the long years intervening, and so it is now possible to improve it, chiefly in the direction of making it more succinct. Bidding, as I say, for the applause of the learned, I stuffed it with sonorous but useless words, thus playing the sedulous ape to the learned themselves. Today I empty it, shrink it, chop off its excrescences. The result is this:

A novel is a prose narrative of fictitious events, in which one or more normal persons are shown in reaction against a definite and probable series of external stimuli and a real state of civilization.

Here we have the novel in a nutshell, and yet no essential element is missing. The thing defined is not fiction in general, nor even prose fiction in general, but the novel in particular. All other forms of imaginative writing, however closely they may approximate it in this way or that, are excluded. The epic and the ballad, though grandparents of the novel, are barred out by the word "prose"; the drama, though its father and mother, by the word "narrative"; the moral fable, its feeble-minded brother, by the word "probable." The romance, though it may deal, at least in part, with the passions and aspirations that move all of us, cannot get in: the state of civilization in Zenda is not "real" and heroes seven feet eight inches in height are not "normal." And the simple tale, the bald story, the plot in the altogether—we know it best as the detective story, the best seller—this powerful stimulant of the liver and midriff is outlawed, too, for though it may enter into the making of a novel, its lack of attachment to a definite background prevents it being a novel itself.

It is the background, indeed, that chiefly marks the novel, and after the background, the normality of the people under observation. The aim in a genuine novel is not merely to describe a particular man, but to describe a typical man, and to show him in active conflict with a more or less permanent and recognizable environment—fighting it, taking color from it, succumbing to it. If that environment sinks into indistinctiveness or unimportance, if it might be changed, let us say, from the England of 1870 to the England of 1914

without materially modifying the whole character and experience of the man—or, as the ancient Greeks used to call him, the protagonist—then the story of his adventures is scarcely a novel at all, but merely a tale *in vacuo*, a disembodied legend, the dry bones of a novel. The better the novel, indeed, the more the man approaches Everyman, and the more the background overshadows him. In the average best seller he is superb, irresistible and wholly autonomous. He is the easy master of every situation that his environment confronts him with; he is equally successful at killing cannibals, snaring burglars, operating airships, terrorizing the stock market or making love. He is not the product and plaything of fate, but its boss. The world is his oyster.

But as we ascend the scale of art and sense we find the protagonist gradually losing his superhuman efficiency. More and more he is swayed and conditioned by the civilization around him; the thing he does is not the forthright and magnificent thing that he would perhaps like to do, but the prudent and customary thing that he *can* do; as the zoölogists say, he takes on protective coloration as he learns wisdom by experience. And when we get among masterpieces, we find that he tends to become no more than a function of his environment, a convenient symbol for representing and explaining that environment. The center of interest in "Lord Jim" is not so much Jim himself as the universal and overwhelming prejudice which drives him beyond the pale of the white man, and the vast, barbaric darkness which then engulfs him. And in "Huckleberry Finn" it is not Huck as an individual that holds us, but the Eternal Boy within him and the Old South around him. And in "Henry Esmond" it is not Henry, nor even his Beatrice, but the London of Queen Anne. And in "Kim" it is the inscrutable East. And in "The Brothers Karamazov" it is brooding Russia.

To repeat, the background must be real and the man must be typical. They are so in all of the great novels; they are not so in most of the bad ones.

True enough, a novel may meet both conditions squarely, and yet show a lot of serious defects, but the mere fact that it meets them is enough to reduce the number of such defects and to make us patient with those that remain. It is for this reason, I suppose, that I have been very agreeably entertained by "THE MAKING OF AN ENGLISHMAN," by W. L. George (*Dodd-Mead*), despite some rough places in the flow of the narrative, and some thin ones. The thing that Mr. George attempts to do here is to study a whole people and a whole state of civilization through the eyes and soul of a single man, and though, as I say, he falls short of complete success, he yet proceeds about the business so gallantly and with so much apparent respect for it that the result is a work which stands boldly out from the general. His immediate model, I venture, is H. G. Wells, with an occasional bow to George Moore, but I see no sign whatever of slavish imitation. To George, indeed, imitation is not necessary: he has his own method, his own style, his own point of view. But he has obviously tried to bring his book into accordance with standards that are sound and reasonable, and if he has not actually produced something of the first class, he has at least given us a second-rater that deserves the most respectful consideration.

The framework of the story is simplicity itself. Lucien Cadoresse, the son of a Marseilles ship broker, is seized in early youth with an extravagant admiration of all things English—the fruit, no doubt, of his daily observation of England's preëminence on the sea. When his father dies he goes to London to enter the English branch of the Cadoresse firm, which now becomes the head office, and there he applies himself assiduously to the task of becoming an Englishman himself, not only in speech, dress and bearing, but also in ideals and aspirations. It is far more difficult than he expected. A persistent Frenchness still afflicts him. He cannot acquire the English calm, the English reserve, the English spirit of compromise, the deep-lying English love



of justice, fairness, good sportsmanship. Even when, after half a dozen years, he begins to feel that he is winning, that he has actually begun to think and act like a genuine Englishman, it is suddenly brought home to him that the English themselves are yet to be convinced, that he is still a foreigner in their eyes. His father's old partner, in whose office he works, has a daughter, and with this daughter young Cadorese falls in love. He is crushed and astounded when Papa Lawton refuses him as a son-in-law—on the ground that he is too foreign! In despair, he goes back to France.

But he is no longer a Frenchman, however he may fall short of being an Englishman. Marseilles has become a strange city to him. His very mother and sister seem remote, outlandish, incomprehensible. For a brief period of acute suffering he is a man without a country. Then he goes back to England and resumes his slow and painful metamorphosis. He goes into business with an Englishman and they succeed from the start. Bit by bit, he forces himself into the English habit of mind, the English outlook upon the world. The thing begins to grow easier day by day. He no longer finds it necessary to argue with himself, to keep a watch upon himself, to combat French instincts with newfound English prejudices. One day, after a last fling as a Frenchman, he meets Edith Lawton by accident, and his old affection is fanned into flame. He now decides to tackle Papa Lawton again, and this time he gets a second surprise. All parental objection has vanished—chiefly, he is told, because Edith is now of age and hence mistress of herself (what an English idea!), but also, it would appear, because Lucien himself has at last thrown off his French stigmata, and become the Englishman of his dreams.

So much for the mere story. Obviously, its central figure is not so much the Frenchman who tries to be an Englishman as the Englishman he tries to be. It is Mr. George's principal business to depict that Englishman at full length, and here, I think, he suc-

ceeds admirably. His own early life was spent chiefly in France, and so he came back to England, as a young man, with the open and wondering and somewhat puzzled eyes of Cadorese. He sees clearly enough, of course, that there is more than one Englishman, even more than one typical Englishman, but he also sees the sweeping isosocial curves of caste, and how nearly all Englishmen between two adjoining curves come finally to thinking alike, and how the thinking of each caste is colored by the thinking of all the others, and by those fundamental problems of national existence in which all are alike concerned. Here, as he sets it down, is the creed of the normal Englishman of the upper class, the public school Englishman, the property owner, the Parliament man:

I believe in the gentlemen of England. I believe that I must shave every morning and every morning take a bath, have my clothes made to order, in such wise that no man shall look at them twice. I believe in the Church, the Army, the Navy, the Law, and faithfully hold it to be my duty to maintain my caste if fate has called me to a walk in life other than these. I believe that I must have a decent club. I believe that I must not drink to excess, nor be a teetotaler. I believe in my father's politics. I believe that I must not tell lies, nor cheat at cards, nor apply the letter of the law in games. I believe that I must perjure myself to save a woman's reputation, even if she has none; respect all women, except those who are not respectable, for they are outlawed; I believe that I must hold my passions in check, feel shame when they master me and yield only in secret, because I am a gentleman of England. And, above all, that which I believe I must never tell.

France, too, has gentlemen, but do they subscribe to this code? Read the story of poor Cadorese's struggles and you will see how little they do. It is with the multitude of little things—the delicate, unspoken points of conduct—that he has his worst difficulties. It takes him two or three years to understand that, to an Englishman, mere beauty is not an important quality in a necktie—that the ideal tie is not the one that everyone admires but the one that no one notices. It takes him longer to learn how to play games to win and yet not triumph in the winning. It takes him even longer to get rid of

his Latin view of women—his irresistible tendency to remember that they are women and not mere persons—his inability to see them without noticing them, or to notice them without trying to make them notice him. But in the end, as I have said, he attains to his heart's desire. His clothes, after ten years, are an Englishman's clothes. He has got his caressing eyes under control. He is able to look at a housemaid day after day, and yet not recognize her when he meets her on the street. He has throttled the last of his emotions. He has forgotten how to weep, to gesticulate, to boast. He has learned the great lesson that a man is a game and not a combat. He has hidden his old self behind an impenetrable mask of decorum, of self-control, of cold detachment. He has become an Englishman.

As I have said, the book has given me very agreeable entertainment—more, indeed, than I have got out of any other novel of the past half-year. Its defects lie in the fact that Mr. George's canvas is a bit too big for his brush. But he is plainly making faster progress than nine-tenths of the other younger English novelists. The distance separating "THE MAKING OF AN ENGLISHMAN" from his first novel, "A Bed of Roses," is enormous. "A Bed of Roses" showed promise, but it was clumsily planned and, in more than one place, amateurishly executed. Its success was due almost entirely, I believe, to the pagan and somewhat startling idea behind it: as an actual work of art it was full of faults. But in this latest book the author takes a long stride forward. He has come to a larger and truer conception of the nature and purpose of the novel, and he has begun to acquire, at the same time, an excellent technical grasp of his materials.

The comparison with Wells is one that he can readily face. Wells, of course, has done vastly better things—for example, "Tono Bungay" and "Ann Veronica"—but he has also done worse things, and one of them is "The Passionate Friends," which I reviewed two or three months ago. Here, indeed,

the master plays runner-up to the disciple.

Among the remaining novels I find but few that repay the hard labor of reading them. Such things as Anne Warner's "SUNSHINE JANE" (*Little-Brown*), to borrow a term from English politics, do not belong to practical fiction: they are merely tracts in fictional form, and usually very stupid ones. Mrs. Warner has been dead, I believe, for more than a year, but the New Thought magazines are still full of her stuff, and now and then another new volume of it is issued. My copy of "SUNSHINE JANE" is marked "second printing," but on the page following the title it appears that this second edition was printed before the first, as witness:

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Reprinted, January, 1914.

However, such magic is not difficult to the New Thought. It is mere child's play compared to the miracles that Sunshine Jane achieves in her little New England village, curing invalids, taming shrews, executing the Beatitudes, radiating medicinal vibrations—and marrying Lorenzo Rath, the worthy young artist. Another fair uplifter is in "THE PRECIPICE," by Elia W. Peattie (*Houghton-Mifflin*). The name of this one is Kate Barrington, and she is driven from home by the unappreciativeness of a cold and scientific father. Chicago is the place she heads for, and there she takes quarters at Hull House and devotes herself to rescuing slum children from their parents. It takes her but a single fortnight, it appears, to become an "expert" at this difficult business: at all events, she is given "police powers" by the uplifters higher up, and begins putting unsatisfactory mothers into the Bridewell. But before she actually settles down to work—to be exact, on page 43—she meets Karl Wander, the dashing young mining magnate, and as the tale closes it is this Mr. Wander, and not the uplift, that seems to be her main concern. Their final dialogue is full of novelty, in setting if not in substance. They are standing on neighboring pinnacles of the Rocky Mountains, with a deep

crevasse between them, and across this abyss they exchange their sweet nothings. When Kate comes to her fore-ordained "Yes," she has to fairly whoop it.

The trade goods of the spring keep to the usual low level. "THE RED EMERALD," by John Reed Scott (*Lippincott*), is a sort of unconscious burlesque of all the best sellers—a nightmare of lost jewels, beautiful women, "smart" dialogue and chromatic illustrations. In "THE BEST MAN," by Grace Livingston Hill Lutz (*Lippincott*), we encounter a Secret Service man who wears a false goatee, anesthetizes his quarry with what is called "a fund of anecdote"—and allows himself to be married to a strange girl in mistake for another man! "THE FORESTER'S DAUGHTER," by Hamlin Garland (*Harper*), is a tale of young love in the Colorado hills, with a hero almost feminine in his weakness and a heroine almost masculine in her strength. "THE STRONG HEART," by A. R. Goring-Thomas (*Lane*), introduces us anew to our old friend, the poor but deserving girl who is wooed and won by a young aristocrat, and who afterward woos and wins his family. "THE IRON YEAR," by Walter Bloem (*Lane*), is a translation from the German—a tale of the Franco-Prussian War, with the usual love affair between a dashing young officer and a daughter of the enemy. Our own Civil War has yielded so enormous a crop of just such romances that this one bears an air of staleness, but its battle scenes are very vigorously done.

Humor of varying quality is to be found in "SANDY," by S. R. Crockett (*Macmillan*); "THE TREASURE," by Kathleen Norris (*Macmillan*); "SIMPLE SIMON," by A. Neil Lyon (*Lane*); "TIDE MARKS," by Margaret Westrup (*Macmillan*); "SOMEBODY'S LUGGAGE," by F. J. Randall (*Lane*); "A WISE SON," by Charles Sherman (*Bobbs-Merrill*); "WHEN WILLIAM CAME," by H. H. Munro (*Lane*), and "ANTHONY THE ABSOLUTE," by Samuel Merwin (*Century*). Of the lot, the most amusing is the Crockett story, which has for its

central character a sort of grotesque Scotch Admirable Crichton who essays to conquer London. But there is also excellent stuff in Mrs. Norris' book and Mr. Munro's, the first a satirical study of the old-fashioned woman, with particular reference to her blundering dealing with the servant problem, and the second a highly diverting picture of England after the threatened German conquest. "SIMPLE SIMON" and "ANTHONY THE ABSOLUTE" have a Lockean flavor: in each there is a fantastic hero who conquers by his very strangeness.

"THE HEALTH MASTER," by Samuel Hopkins Adams (*Houghton-Mifflin*), is a medical novel, and perhaps the first ever written. By "medical novel," of course, I mean one that deals with medicine as it is practised by physicians who have actually studied it. Of novels dealing ignorantly and dishonestly with medical problems we have long had a surfeit—novels boosting Christian Science, novels about super-Oslerian swamis and sorcerers, novels about sex hygiene, the Emmanuel Movement, Fletcherism and such-like fads of the hour, novels in which heroes and heroines are brought to bed with strange and fantastic diseases, and restored to health by such unofficial balms as good news, Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" and the passion of love. There was a time, indeed, when all fiction, at least in English, was largely medical. That was during the Victorian, or Paleolithic, period of our era. Every respectable heroine, in those days, suffered from fainting spells and had to be revived at least once in every chapter. Putting all the novels of Mrs. Braddon and "The Duchess" together, you will find that more than fifty pounds of smelling salts are used in them, not to mention a butt of brandy. Pernicious anemia was then endemic in the world of romance. The ideal heroine was so pale that her very ears were translucent. Even at moments of osculation, when a slight heightening of the color might be regarded as wholly normal, she merely grew more pale. Only impropriety could congest the outposts of her vascular system. She blushed when

she heard the word "damn," and turned as red as a cannon cracker when she saw her 'houghtless old father in his shirtsleeves.

But, as I have said, Mr. Adams' story deals in no such super-pathology. On the contrary, it is a painstaking effort to set forth, in the form of a fictional narrative, the precise ways in which modern medicine seeks to safeguard and prolong human life. The central character, a young physician, takes a fee from a wealthy merchant on the Chinese plan: that is to say, he is paid to keep the merchant's family well, and not merely to treat its members when they are ill. He is a brisk and persuasive fellow, and what is more, he knows his trade; but he hasn't easy sailing, by any means. Potent and immemorial obstacles are in his way—of habit, prejudice, faith, terror and ignorance. The old grandmother of the household is his sworn foe from the start. She is an eminent physician herself, a celebrated wrestler with measles and croup, an ancient of the hot toddy and porous plaster. But bit by bit young Dr. Strong conquers her, and with her the whole family and the circle of its friends. Bit by bit he substitutes intelligent preparedness for the old blind striking in the dark and running away. And in the end he forces his lesson home: that most human ills, as the Christian Scientists are so fond of saying, are the fruits of error; that only a few of them need be faced blindly; that health is something that may be won and held by knowing how.

Mr. Adams is an associate fellow of the American Medical Association, and his medical facts bear the imprimatur of the leading physicians and surgeons of the United States. He has done greater execution against medical quackery in this country than any other man, and perhaps as much as any other dozen men. His articles in *Collier's Weekly* on patent medicines and the allied frauds were truly devastating in their effect. The manufacturers of some of these villainous nostrums were ruined out of hand, and practically all of those who escaped with their hides had to

make concessions to the public safety in their formulæ and to common honesty in their advertising. Of all the muck-rakers who raged and roared a decade ago, I know of none who tackled worse evils than Mr. Adams, or who combatted those he tackled with more courage, skill and good sense. He redeemed, in fact, the whole science of muckraking; he alone was sufficient to make it respectable. The doctors did well to make him an honorary member of their national association. If ever the proposed Department of Public Health is set up at Washington, with a seat in the Cabinet for its head, the Hon. S. H. Adams is the man fore-ordained for its portfolio. The quacks will like him no more than they would like an M. D., but they will be unable to denounce his attacks as the enterprises of a jealous rival.

But to return to the novels. "THE LIGHT OF WESTERN STARS," by Zane Grey (*Harper*); "OVERLAND RED," by some author who chooses to remain anonymous (*Houghton-Mifflin*), and "CHILDREN OF THE WILD," by Charles G. D. Roberts (*Macmillan*), are all stories of his wild, wild West. In the first we encounter a rough but handsome cowboy who conquers the heart of a rich and world-weary woman of the East; in the second we are introduced to one who is cowboy, poet, hobo and metaphysician; and in the last we accompany a veteran woodsman and his little nephew on a trip into the mountains, and learn a lot about the habits of the *fera natura*, especially the bears. Back to the East in "THE LOVE AFFAIR OF A HOMELY GIRL," by Jean Louise de Forest (*Sully-Klein-teich*). The heroine of this story, Rebecca Vanderpool, is so lacking in pulchritude that she reaches twenty-eight without ever having had a beau. Then a blind man falls in love with her, the same being Martin Lewis. The effect of this experience is very beneficial to Rebecca. It makes her lose her self-consciousness; she forgets her habit of blushing an unbeautiful brick red; she drops her old theory that she is merely tolerated in the world, and



begins to proceed upon the assumption that she is desirable and desired. The result is that two other men fall in love with her, both being of sound vision. But she sticks to Martin, and when he suddenly recovers his sight the light of love continues to make her charming to him, and so they hunt up a preacher and are married, and, let us hope, live happily ever after.

If, after reading this collection, your appetite for romantic adventure is still unsatisfied, you will find more of it in "ROSE OF THE GARDEN," by Katharine Tynan (*Bobbs-Merrill*), an attempt to make fiction of the dashing career of Lady Sarah Lennox, and in "IDONIA," by Arthur F. Wallis (*Little-Brown*), a tale of love and derring-do in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth. Another book by Katharine Tynan (whether the same or another I do not know) is also in the current crop. It is called "A MESALLIANCE" (*Duffield*), and it tells about a somewhat sniffish London bachelor, Ralph Bretherton by name, who takes it very badly when his cousin, dear old Edward Harding, marries a girl of the people. But after Edward dies Ralph comes to know Lizzie Harding better, and the better he knows her the better he likes her. In the end he is glad to marry her himself.

The ridiculous Comstocks who run the English circulating libraries have put their ban upon "ROUND THE CORNER," by Gilbert Cannan (*Appleton*), and "THE DEVIL'S GARDEN," by W. B. Maxwell (*Bobbs-Merrill*), and in consequence both books are getting a good deal of compensatory praise in the English press. As for me, I see no sound reason for the attack on these novels, nor am I wholly convinced by the defense of the reviewers. On the one hand, neither book is indecent, and on the other hand, neither is a great novel. But in both of them there are plain marks of that saving honesty of purpose which always commands respect, however little it may arouse enthusiasm.

Of the two, I find "ROUND THE CORNER" the more interesting. It is a full-length study of an English family, father, mother and six children, and it

follows them over a period that can be but little short of fifty years. As people go, the parents are respectable folk—the father a hard-working clergyman, the mother a sentimental clinging vine of the true Victorian species. But in the very virtues of the two there are defects of character—small weaknesses, incompetencies, stupidities, obliquities—and in the children these defects show clearly. Of the three daughters, two are mushy, moony, small-souled, parasitical. Of the three sons, one wanders aimlessly for years and then sets up shop as a fourth-rate artist, another goes off to Brazil and is scarcely heard of again, and the third degenerates, by easy stages, from rake to blackguard, and from blackguard to thief, absconder and suicide. There is here no grand clash of wills, no melodramatic play-acting: it is all the lowly tragedy of everyday, so trivial, so pitiful. But within the limits thus set Mr. Cannan has done very creditable work. No one who reads what he has to tell about the Folyats will forget them quickly. It is not a mere "slice of life" that he offers, but a slowly unrolling panorama, a huge piece of tapestry—yards and yards of dull, drab colors, with here and there a high yellow, a staring dab of scarlet.

"THE DEVIL'S GARDEN" is much smaller in scope, and so gives the impression of being more a story and less a history. It deals with the rise and fall of William Dale, an Englishman of the lower middle class. Dale educates himself, becomes a postman, works up to the berth of postmaster in a small town, and then crowns his success by marrying Mavis Petherick, a local beauty. Mavis is of a family that has long served the Barradines, the magnates of the neighborhood, and the reigning Barradine, an elderly bachelor, shows much friendly interest in her and in the fortunes of her husband. By accident, Dale discovers that this hypocritical Samaritan is really a good deal more friendly with Mavis than he ought to be—that, in fact, he debauched her when she was in her teens, and is even yet levying toll upon her. Crazy by the discovery, Dale lies in wait for Barradine and kills

him. The murder has the appearance of an accident and Dale is never suspected. But as the years pass his memory of the crime becomes a greater and greater burden, and in the end it drives him to suicide. Those English reviewers overpraise this book who hail it as a work of genius, but it is unquestionably a work of sound talent.

In "JOHN WARD, M.D.," by Charles Vale (*Kennerley*), we are introduced to two of the current rages of the women's clubs—mental telepathy and eugenics. Dr. Ward, who is a grandson to the wicked and witty old Lord Davenport, is gifted with a singular faculty for telling what the persons he meets are going to say or do day after tomorrow. But it is unaccompanied by any knack of a retroactive character, and so he is unaware that Lady Winter, with whom he falls in love, has been married again, since the lamented Winter's exitus, to Harold Thorpe, the sin-soaked son of the Vicar of Newchurch. When he finds it out through the death of Harold—who dies of fright when his father, the Vicar, accuses him of seducing a village girl and flourishes a pistol at him—he decides that it would be a eugenic crime to marry her.

In George Barr McCutcheon's "BLACK IS WHITE" (*Dodd-Mead*), we are among familiar things, old and new—the stern, hard father of yesteryear, the occultism of today. Say what you will against Mr. McCutcheon—and bitter words, alas, may be said—he at least gives full value for the money he gets. There is never any skimping in his novels; he shows no schizatrachian spirit in weighing out his goods; always he rams into each new volume all the thrills and marvels that some three hundred and more pages of leaded eleven-point type will hold. One finds more of the timeworn stuff in "THE FULL OF THE MOON," by Caroline Lockhart (*Lippincott*), and "ANYBODY BUT ANNE," by Carolyn Wells (*Lippincott*), the first a rip-snorting yarn of the West, with humor to mellow it, and the second a machine-made detective story of the standard model, beginning with a mysterious murder in a Berkshire Hills country house—the latter-

day equivalent of the moated grange of Willkie Collins' day. In "KAZAN," by James Oliver Curwood (*Bobbs-Merrill*), one seems to be traveling remembered ways again—the ways, that is to say, of Jack London's "The Call of the Wild." But before long it appears that Mr. Curwood is writing something quite new, to wit, the story of a romantic love affair between two Eskimo dogs, or, rather, between a "quarter-strain wolf, three-quarters husky" and a full-blooded wolf. Mr. Curwood does far better with this four-footed pair than he has ever done with his Indians, half-breeds and outlaw white men.

In conclusion, let us turn from humor that is unconscious to humor that is deliberate. For instance, to such gay and bubbly stuff as "GENERAL JOHN REGAN," by G. A. Birmingham (*Doran*), which is already familiar to you, I suppose, as a successful farce upon the stage; and to "SIMPSON," by Elinor Mordaunt (*Houghton-Mifflin*), a comedy of bachelors who try to flee the Babylonian woe of women; and to "THE TINDER BOX" (*Century Co.*) and "THE SPARE ROOM" (*Houghton-Mifflin*), light pieces by Maria Thompson Daviess and Mrs. Romilly Pedden respectively; and to "HERE ARE LADIES," by James Stephens (*Macmillan*), a collection of capital short stories, worth far more space than I can give them here; and finally, to "FROM THE ANGLE OF SEVENTEEN," by Eden Phillpotts (*Little-Brown*). Nothing remarkable happens to Corkey, the youngster of seventeen. He has a clerkship in the Apollo Fire Insurance Office, he lives decorously with a maiden aunt, he goes to a dramatic school, he makes modest experiments in literary composition. In brief, a typical boy of the middle class—and Mr. Phillpotts gets very close to the soul of him. The outstanding defect of the book is that the author occasionally writes, not as a boy of seventeen, but as a man looking back toward a boy of seventeen. A pitfall that one essaying juvenile autobiography is almost certain to fall into! Mark Twain avoided it in "Huckleberry Finn"—but Mark Twain was a genius and "Huckleberry Finn" is *sui generis*.